Science/Health / B8

5 planets in rare celestial display

■ News / A5

Erap to sue UK firm tagging him world's 10th most corrupt

■ Saturday Special / D1

Mel Gibson confounds movie power brokers

■ News / A2

Guns, explosives seized from Islamic center in QC

■ Elan / C1

Aha! moment to change your life

Inquirer-GMA 7 election teamup gets new partners

By Dona Pazzibugan

FOR THE THIRD time now, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the GMA 7 network are joining hands to provide a comprehensive all-media coverage of the national elections, this time for the May 14 presidential polls.

The two media leaders have teamed up

INQUIRER-GMA 7/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GMA's Metro sorties abuzz with show biz talk

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SHOWBIZ talk buzzed, people swooned, and nosy celebrity television hosts prodded their candidates to tell all.

GMA'S METRO/ A9

SHOWBIZ NA SHOWBIZ ANG DATING!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Saturday, March 27, 2004 ★★★ 72 pages / 9 sections / vol. 19 / no. 110 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Deal seen to preempt SC

MWSS warned Maynilad debts could collapse business empire

By Philip C. Tubeza

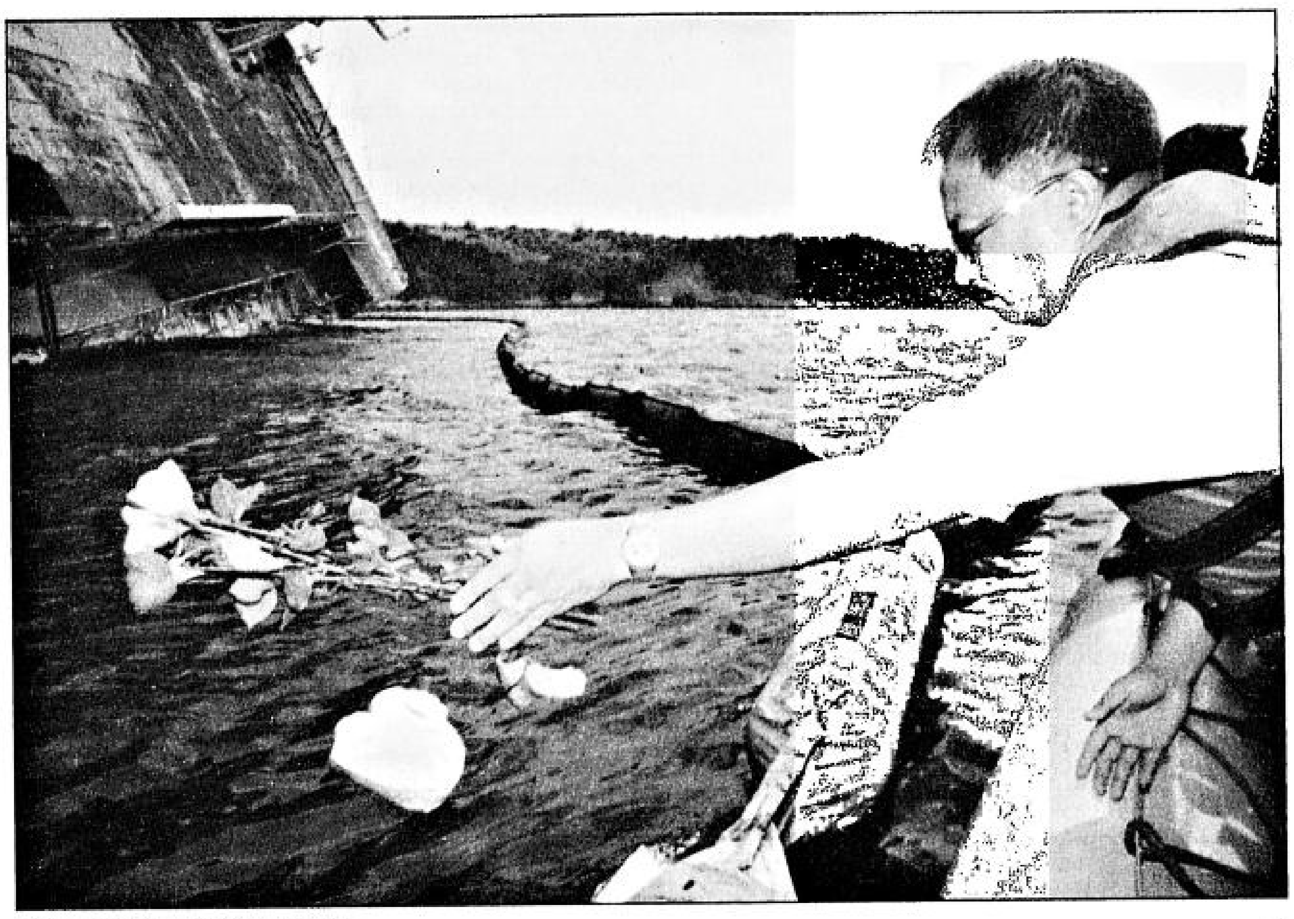
THE MACAPAGAL administration is bent on taking over the debt-saddled Maynilad Water Services to preempt a Supreme Court ruling that could lead to the collapse of the Lopez business empire, according to an INQUIRER source privy to the negotiations for the controversial agreement between the water utility and the state-run Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

The source said the administration was pushing hard for the agreement in order to "dissuade" the high court from ruling on a pending Maynilad petition to stop the government from drawing on Maynilad's $120 million performance bond.

"That is obstruction of justice," the source said.

The government last week announced that it had reached a compromise agreement with

DEAL/ A19



AP

AN UNCERTAIN CLOSURE

In memory of his wife and son who are still missing after almost a month since the SuperFerry 14 caught fire in Manila Bay, Robert Bandarlipe brings roses to the site of the tragedy during wreath-laying rites off the coast of Mariveles. About 50 more remain missing.

Dolphy staying 'home,' for now

THE COUNTRY'S top comedian is keeping his famous "home along the airport" after all. At least for now.

An industry source told the INQUIRER yesterday that the 75-year-old Dolphy—a staunch supporter of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.—would continue to work at the multi-media network ABS-CBN until his talent contract expires in August.

"But what will happen to him in August, we don't know," said the source. "Gabby Lopez said they would simply talk about it in August."

The source said that Lopez, chair of the media giant, personally went to Dolphy's real life home at Marina Bay in Parañaque City on Thursday night and discussed the comedian's future at the network.

For the first time, ABS-CBN on Thursday night categorically denied that the program "Home Along Da Airport" had been canceled.

The network's emphatic denial contrasted with an ABS-CBN statement issued last Sunday by its vice president for government, corporate affairs and public relations, Maloli Manalastas, which carried no such disclaimer.

The INQUIRER had reported that day that ABS-CBN was dropping Dolphy's show allegedly for his support of Poe.

In her statement, Manalastas confirmed that "there was indeed a preliminary discussion between management and Dolphy about his program."

Manalastas had said then: "However, the discussions are matters private to both ABS-CBN and Mr. Rodolfo 'Dolphy' Quizon."

"The network leaves it to the

DOLPHY/ A19

Presidential adviser met, escorted Stanley Ho in Clark

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk
and TJ Burgonio
in Manila

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Hong Kong-based gambling mogul Stanley Ho came and went, but not without stirring speculation that he was getting cozy with the very administration which replaced that of his former ally.

What exactly happened during Ho's visit to Clark last Monday, his first in the country since then President Joseph Estrada's ouster in January 2001? "He only met me and attended the conferment

PRESIDENTIAL/ A9

EFFUSIVE welcome from lawyer Dan Roleda, presidential adviser on foreign investments, for Asia's gambling czar Stanley Ho who arrived aboard his private jet at the Clark Special Economic Zone last Monday for a seven-hour visit.

TONETTE OREJAS/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Bishop returns AUF honorary degree

By Blanche S. Rivera

A PROMINENT member of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday said he was returning the honorary degree conferred on him by the Angeles University Foundation (AUF).

Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, former CBCP president, said he would not want to hold the same honorary doctorate in humanities as casino king Stanley Ho, whom the AUF also thus honored.

"I am returning it as a sign of protest," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Cruz heads the Church's anti-gambling campaign, the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng.

He received the honorary degree from the AUF in the mid-1990s. It was a tribute to his eight-year service in the Archdiocese in Pampanga.

The archbishop said he was not questioning the university's decision to confer an honorary degree on Ho. He said he simply did not want to be included in the same roster as the gambling mogul, said to be one of the world's richest men.

BISHOP/ A9

THE CHARM OFFENSIVE ELECTION 2004

Talks a lot but he's no garden variety politician

Editor's Note: The INQUIRER continues a series of essays on the campaign style and impact of the five presidential candidates, a two-parter for each in alphabetical order.

By Emmie G. Velarde
Desk Editor

(First of two parts)

"CAMPAIGNING is a humbling experience," says Raul Roco, taking a break from storytelling as his SUV speeds toward Bansalan, Davao del Sur.

His trusted friend Irene "Inday" Santiago, coordinator of the Mindanao campaign, nods in agreement. Santiago was Roco's running mate in the 1998 elections, now the subject of their endless reminiscences.

"Humility" in any form is not a word that his critics would associate with the standard-bearer of Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, but surely his rivals would sympathize whether or not they admit it.

He explains: "You need as much help as you can get. *'Ako po si Raul Roco, humihingi ng tulong 'nyo* (I am Raul Roco, asking for

TALKS A LOT/ A20

JOAN BONDOC

GLOBAL MARCH: Raul Roco in the midst of children, his priority sector. In school areas around the country, the big, smiling man in the floral shirt is instantly recognized.

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SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/27/04

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Reyes on kidnap, slay raps: All lies

By Alcuin Papa

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"These (allegations) are baseless and unfounded. These are all lies meant to weaken NKTF and eventually the government at the height of the campaign period," Reyes said in a statement.

In an interview over dzRH, Reyes denied accusations made by Lorna Justine Ramoso that her husband, Rogelio Ramoso, said to be civilian agent and Reyes' close-in bodyguard, and three others were set up and executed by Naktf agents on Dec. 31 last year.

On Wednesday, Ramoso filed kidnapping charges against Reyes, Philippine National Police chief Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane, other Naktf officials, Sen. Noli De Castro and GMA-7 reporter Jiggy Manicad before the Office of the Ombudsman.

But Reyes disowned having one Rogelio Ramoso on the official list of Naktf members. Neither was Ramoso assigned as his close-in bodyguard, he added.

"*Hindi ho siguro tama iyan. Wala akong mga tauhan ng ganyan ang pangalan.* (I don't think that is true. I don't have any subordinates under those names)," Reyes told dzRH yesterday.

Ramoso claimed that her husband was allegedly hired by Reyes to kidnap people who were then later rescued by the Naktf to make it appear that the government was successful in its fight against kidnapping.

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In her complaint before the Ombudsman, Ramoso denied that her husband, his brother Ronald Ramoso, Edwin Pastrana and Ricky Original were involved in the kidnapping of Jethro Chua, a 2-year-old son of a wealthy Filipino-Chinese couple, in Muntinlupa on Dec. 2, 2003.

The Ramoso brothers, Pastrana and Original were later killed in a shoot-out with police and Naktf agents on Dec. 31, 2003 in Mabitac, Laguna, nearly 24 hours after one of their alleged accomplices was arrested and the two-year old boy was rescued.

But Reyes said the four suspects were killed in a legitimate hot-pursuit operation by Nktf operatives and policemen.

Reyes also denied coddling kidnappers. "*Hindi naman tayo nag-aalaga ng kidnapper na ganyan. Di natin ginagawa iyan. Isa pa, may listahan tayo ng mga kidnapper talaga kaya madali* i-verify (We are not coddling kidnappers in that way. We don't do that. Also, we have a list of real kidnappers so we can easily verify)."

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Reyes noted that incidents of kidnappings had gone down recently and that authorities are cleansing their ranks of scalawags. He pointed out that when kidnap victim Jenine Sy was rescued last March 18 two members of the police involved in the abduction were arrested.

"It shows that law enforcement agencies are cleaning their own ranks. We attribute our success to the AFP, PNP, NBI and we are getting support we need from the President, media, and the community."

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Islamic center yields guns and explosives

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The Islamic center in Cubao was used by a Muslim religious group called the Rajah Sulaiman Movement, which authorities say includes Filipino Christian converts to Islam.

The group's alleged leader, Hilario del Rosario Santos, alias Ahmad Islam Santos, escaped, a military official said on condition of anonymity.

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An intelligence official who did not want to be named said there were "indications" Santos was planning bombing attacks in Metropolitan Manila.

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7 DQ CASES

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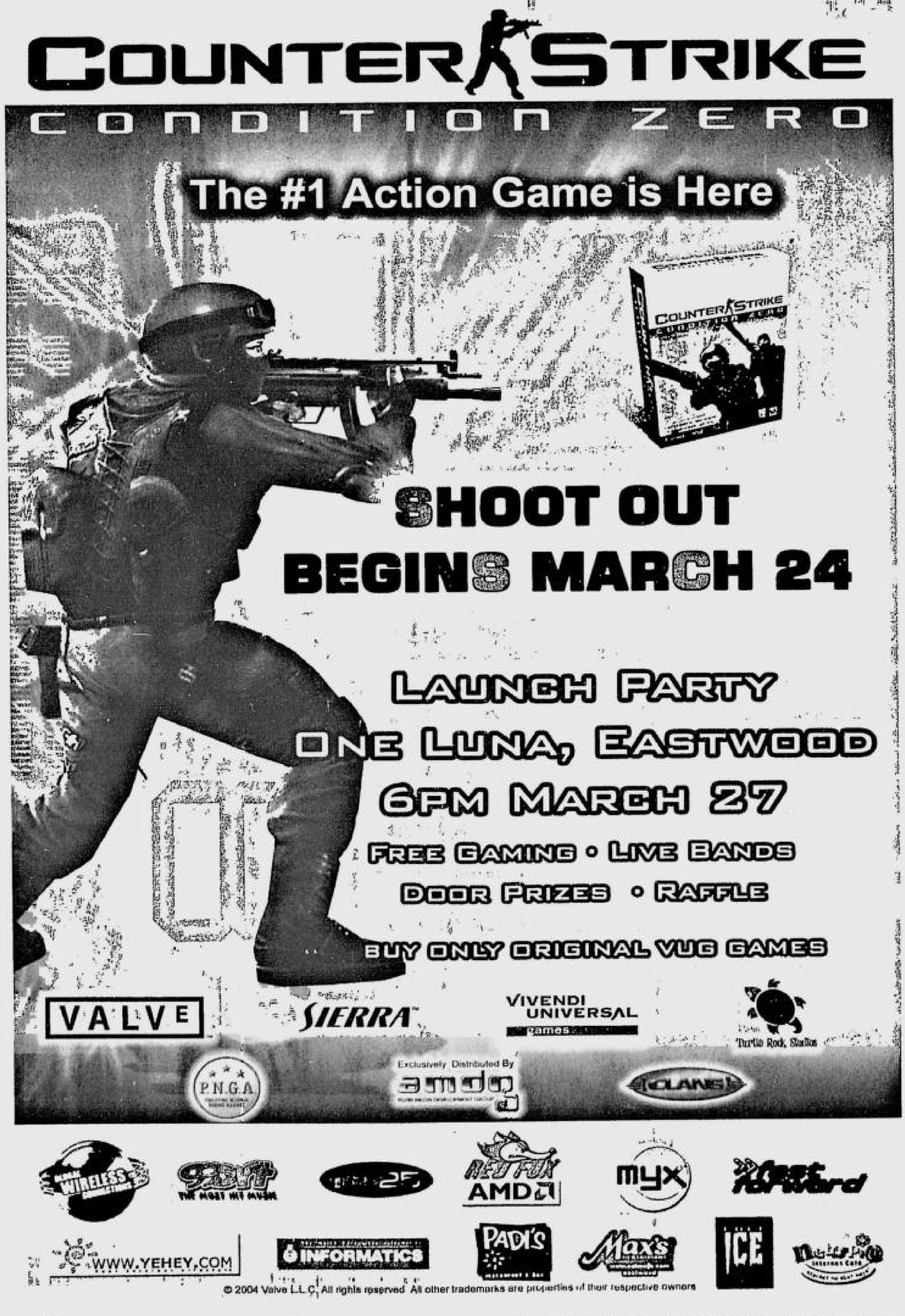

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E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

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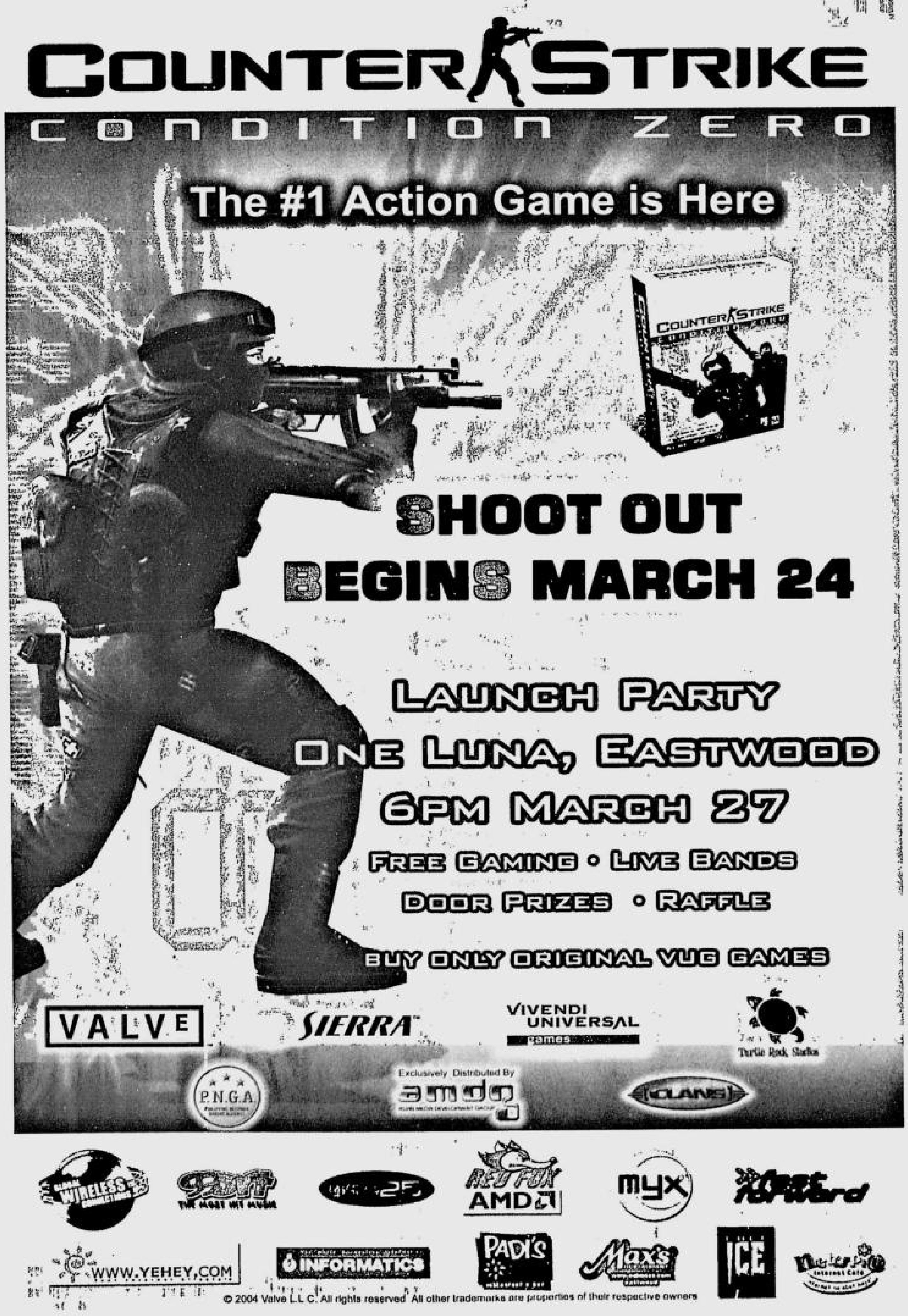

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No Pinoy fatality in Kosovo fighting; DFA apologizes

By Jerome Aning

THERE are no fatalities among the Filipino policemen assigned to the United Nations peacekeeping force in the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo.

Acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Ralph Seguis made the clarification yesterday as he apologized for an erroneous report from the department earlier, attributing the mistake to bureaucracy and time differences.

"The department apologizes to the families and friends of our brave police officers in Kosovo, and we will do everything to ensure that this incident is not repeated. We have to institute reforms in order to avoid a similar occurrence," Seguis said.

A UN police officer from Ghana was the one who was killed, according to a report. But last week, the Filipino contingent 's house in Pristina, Kosovo's capital was also burned and looted.

Seguis said that on Thursday, the DFA directly called the UN Office in Kosovo, after failing to get through to Philippine Embassy officials in Budapest, the Hungarian capital. The Philippines is seven hours ahead of Hungary.

In a press conference later, the undersecretary told reporters that they were making arrangements for the return of the body of a dead Filipino policeman who was not named because of a DFA policy.

Carlos Soreta, special assistant to DFA Secretary Delia Albert, also insisted the report was accurate despite a denial from the Philippine National Police.

Permanent representative to the UN Ambassador Lauro Baja also made a similar disclaimer, adding that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations confirmed that the fatality was from Ghana.

A report from Philippine ambassador to Hungary Alejandro del Rosario, who has jurisdiction over Serbia and Montenegro, also said all the Filipino policemen were safe according to Supt. Getulio Napenas, commander of the 55-man PNP force in Kosovo.

"What is clear from this incident is the need for the DFA to have direct contacts with our military and police forces which are deployed overseas so we can get real-time updates in urgent situations," Seguis said.

The DFA said it based its erroneous announcement on information from the UN, but Seguis said it was not necessary to blame anyone.

"While it is usually expected that the UN would have accurate information in these matters, I can fully appreciate and understand the difficult circumstances that they face in conflict and post-conflict areas. They are under circumstances that are far from normal," he said.

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ROSTER OF ROGUES

Erap protests inclusion in most corrupt list

By Armand N. Nocum

OUSTED ex-president Estrada strongly protested his being tagged as the 10th most corrupt leader in the world, and has threatened to sue the UK-based Transparency International that came out with the corruption report.

In its 2004 Global Corruption Report, Transparency International said Estrada allegedly stole an estimated $78 to $80 million in the three years that he was President.

"I'm going to sue this Transparency International," said Estrada in a phone call to the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said his inclusion in the rogue list was "baseless" and "unfair."

"I did not take any money from the government coffers. The money came from the private sector," said Estrada, who is accused of taking bribe money from illegal gambling and stock manipulation, among others.

The disgraced leader was ranked the 10th most corrupt chief executive in a list that included Indonesia's Suharto, who ranked first, allegedly stealing $15 billion to $35 billion; and the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, coming in second, with some $5 billion to $10 billion in embezzled money.

Other leaders in the list were former leaders of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko; Sani Abacha of Nigeria; Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia; Jean-Claude Duvalier of Haiti; and Alberto Fujimori of Peru.

Estrada said the $78 to $80 million that the TI said he allegedly stole could have been taken from the Jose Velarde account, which he said belongs to Jaime Dichavez, one of his businessman cronies.

"This may be a smear campaign. Maybe this is their response to the video compact disc I have released showing my innocence," said Estrada, who is facing graft and plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan.

ESTRADA

He also questioned the timing of the TI report, coming as it did during the presidential campaign in which his close friend of 40 years, Fernando Poe Jr. is the opposition standard bearer.

Political analysts have warned that Estrada, who is accused of stealing up to P4.1 billion, could be a liability for Poe.

Estrada, who is believed to have convinced his buddy to run, is seen as the titular leader and rallying point of groups opposed to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Estrada later released two statements through his Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

In a letter to TI chair Peter Eigen, Estrada took the latter to task for allegedly basing its reports on the accounts of the country's "wild, wild press with no strong test of, or commitment to, truth."

He also asked why the allegedly "massive graft" in the Macapagal administration or his predecessors were not included in the TI's research.

"Strangely, TI is silent on the many scandals associated with the administration of my predecessors and successor involving huge government contracts," he said.

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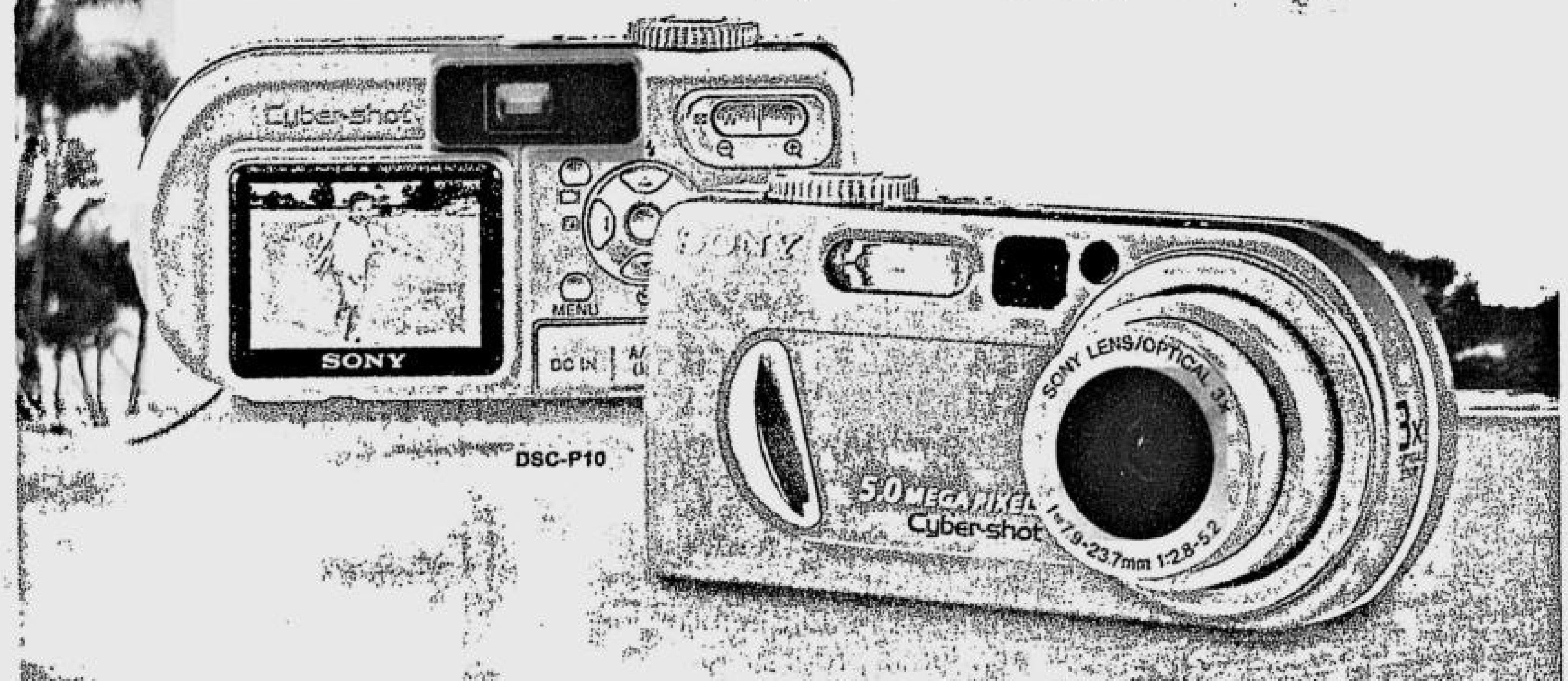

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Pinay in hot water in Israel for giving baby away

By Jerome Aning

A 35-YEAR-OLD Filipina caregiver in Israel who claimed to the police she found an abandoned newborn baby, is now in hot water after she admitted that the baby was her own.

Israeli media reports said the unidentified Filipina brought baby, its umbilical cord still connected, to the Tel Aviv's Holon district police station, claiming that she found it in a trash bin outside the garage of the building where she lives and works.

When questioned by the police, she admitted that she had given birth to the infant on Thursday morning. She said she decided to hand it over to police because she believes that welfare services would be better able to look after it.

The woman, who works as a caregiver to a disabled person, told police that she has a family and children back in the Philippines and that nobody in her family knew that she was pregnant.

Good health

She said the baby would have a better life if raised in a state-run nursery and later given for adoption.

The police took the infant, whose sex was not disclosed, to the city's Wolfson Medical Center. The baby was reported to be in good health.

Authorities were still studying if the Filipina could be charged criminally.

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Reds raid Leyte power plant, kill 5

By Alcuin Papa

MEMBERS of the New People's Army (NPA) attacked a geothermal power plant of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) in Leyte early yesterday morning, killing two policemen and three civilians.

The military said five NPA members burned Rig number 8 of the plant in Sitio Cabantug, Lake Danao, Ormoc City at around 5 a.m.

An hour later, responding elements of the Philippine National Police and employees of the PNOC were ambushed by around 80 members of the NPA. Two policemen and three civilians died in the ambush.

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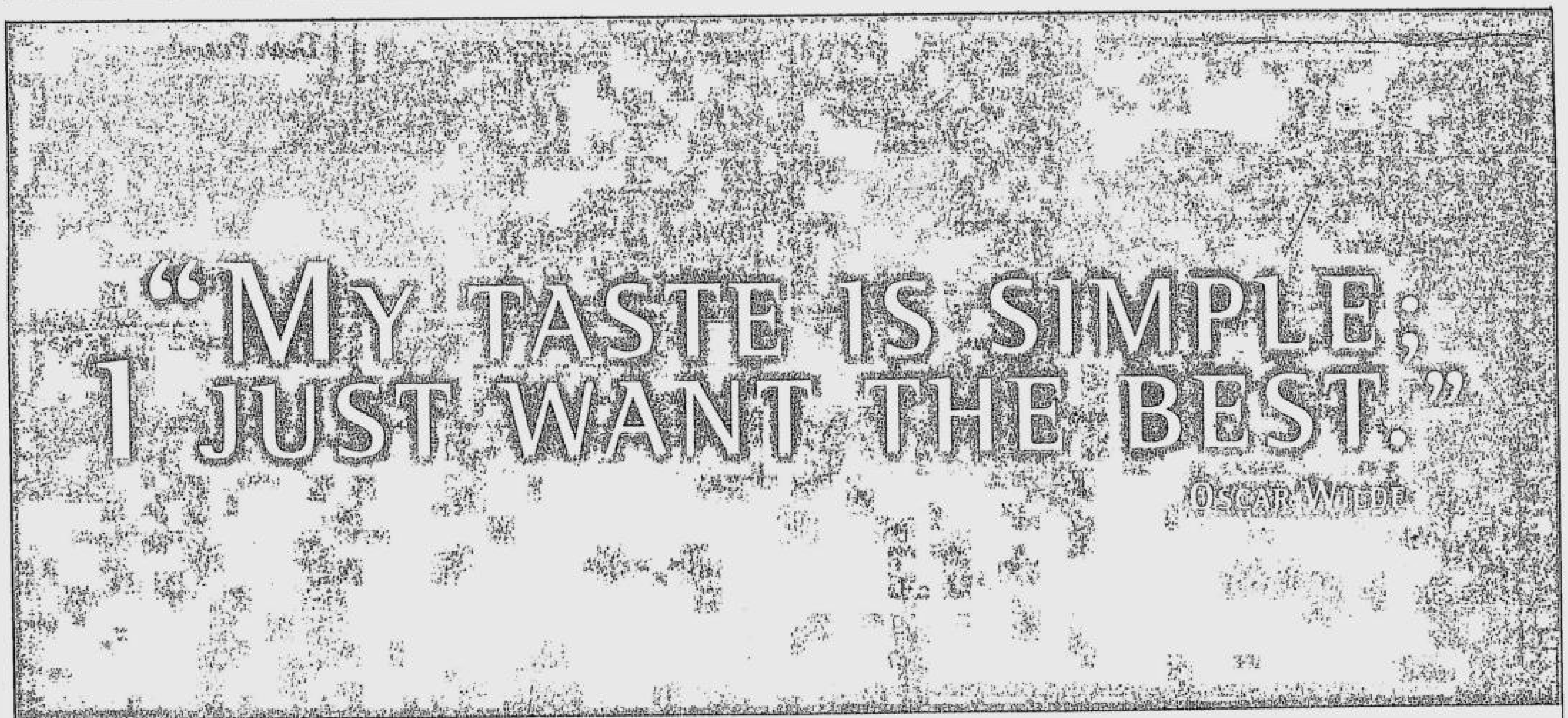

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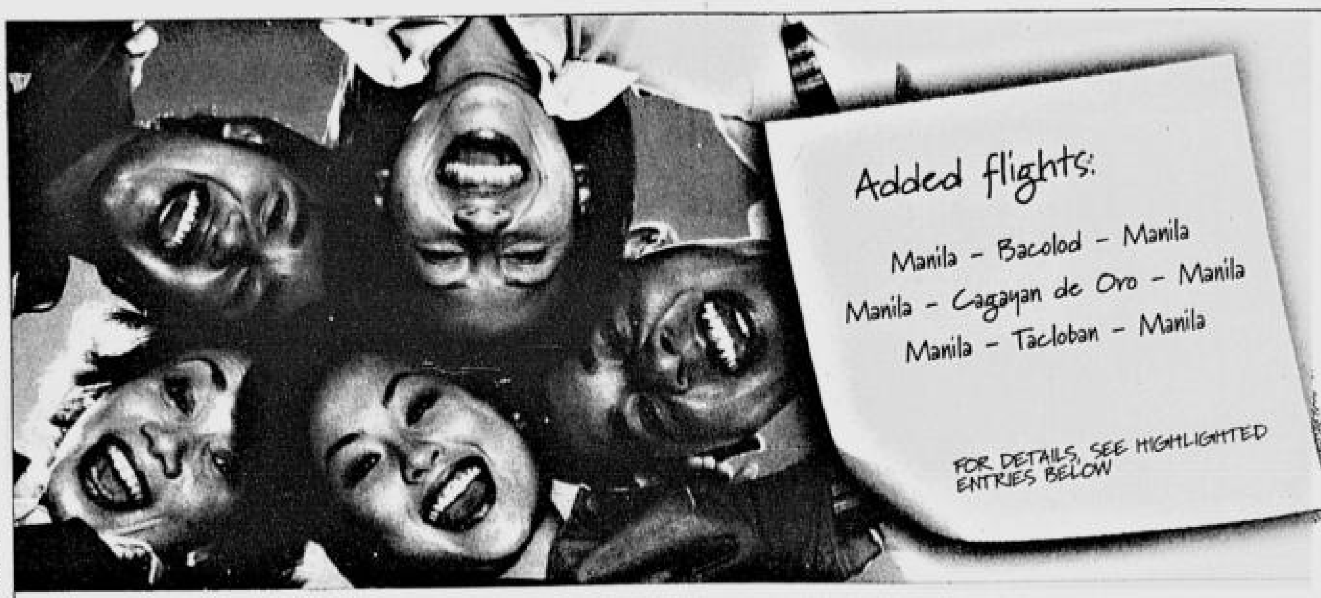
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ORIGIN: MANILA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
CEBU	5J - 557	Daily	DC9	0130	0240	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 2,199
	5J - 559	Daily	DC9	0500	0610	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 2,399
	5J - 561	Daily	B757	0700	0810	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 563	Daily	DC9	0900	1010	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 565	Daily	DC9	1100	1210	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 567	Daily	DC9	1300	1410	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 577	W/Th/Sa/ Su	B757	1325	1435	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 2,199
	5J - 569	Daily	B757	1500	1610	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 571	Daily	DC9	1700	1810	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 573	Daily	B757	1900	2010	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 2,399
DAVAO	5J - 961	Daily	B757	0430	0610	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 963	Daily	B757	1020	1200	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 965	Daily	DC9	1320	1500	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 967	Daily	DC9	1540	1720	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
CAGAYAN DE ORO	5J - 381	Daily	DC9	0510	0635	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 383	Daily	DC9	0930	1055	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 385	Daily	DC9	1100	1225	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
TACLOBAN	5J - 651	Daily	DC9	0610	0720	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 655	Daily	DC9	1150	1300	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 657	Daily	DC9	1410	1520	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
ILOILO	5J - 451	Daily	DC9	0520	0620	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	P 2,199
	5J 453	Daily	DC9	0620	0720	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	P 2,199
	5J - 455	Daily	DC9	0955	1055	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 459	Daily	DC9	1520	1620	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
BACOLOD	5J - 473	Daily	DC9	0510	0610	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	P 2,199
	5J - 475	Daily	DC9	1000	1100	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 477	Daily	DC9	1340	1440	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 479	Daily	DC9	1650	1750	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 851	Daily	DC9	0520	0650	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
ROXAS	5J - 373	Daily	DC9	0500	0600	P 2,539	P 2,149		
DUMAGUETE	5J - 625	Mo/We/Fr/ Su	DC9	0530	0640	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 627	Daily	DC9	1240	1350	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
KALIBO	5J - 339	Daily	DC9	0920	1010	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 343	Daily	DC9	1325	1415	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
BUTUAN	5J - 787	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	0900	1025	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - +/223	Mo/We/Sa	DC9	-	1140	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
+ VIA Cebu 5J 557/ 559/ 561/ 563									
PUERTO PRINCESA	5J - 637	Daily	DC9	0710	0820	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
	5J - +/277	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	-	1225	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
+ VIA Cebu 5J 557/ 559/ 561/ 563									
SUBIC	5J - 100	Su	DC9	1415	1445		P 500		

ORIGIN: CEBU

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 556	Mo/Th/Fr/Su	B757	0300	0410	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 1,899
	5J - 558	Daily	DC9	0400	0510	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 560	Daily	DC9	0700	0810	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 562	Daily	B757	0900	1010	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 564	Daily	DC9	1100	1210	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 566	Daily	DC9	1300	1410	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 568	Daily	DC9	1500	1610	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 570	Daily	B757	1700	1810	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 572	Daily	DC9	1900	2010	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 1,899
	5J - 574	Daily	B757	2100	2210	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	P 1,899
DAVAO	5J - 593	Daily	DC9	0815	0905	P2,589	P 2,249	P 2,199	
	5J - 597	Daily	DC9	1455	1545	P2,589	P 2,249	P 2,199	
BUTUAN	5J - 223	Mo/We/Sa	DC9	1110	1140	P 1,839	P 1,499		
PUERTO PRINCESA	5J - 227	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	1115	1225	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 431	Mo/We/Fr/ Sa	DC9	0905	1000	P 2,649	P 2,319	P 2,199	
BACOLOD	5J - 126	Daily	DC9	0810	0840	P 1,879	P 1,539		
ILOILO	5J - 164	Daily	DC9	1710	1745	P2,099	P 1,759		

ORIGIN: DAVAO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 962	Daily	B757	0740	0920	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 964	Daily	B757	1300	1440	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 966	Daily	DC9	1625	1805	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 968	Daily	DC9	1800	1940	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
CEBU	5J - 594	Daily	DC9	0945	1035	P 2,589	P 2,249	P 2,199	
	5J - 598	Daily	DC9	1540	1630	P 2,589	P 2,249	P 2,199	
ILOILO	5J - 598/164*	Daily	DC9	1540	1745	P 3,645	P 3,195	P 2,799	
**VIA Cebu*									
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 393	Tu/Th/Su	DC9	0910	1010	P 2, 649	P 2,319	P 2,199	

ORIGIN: ROXAS

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 374	Daily	DC9	0710	0810	P 2,539	P 2,149		

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ORIGIN: BACOLOD

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 474	Daily	DC9	0920	1020	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 476	Daily	DC9	1150	1250	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 478	Daily	DC9	1530	1630	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 480	Daily	DC9	1840	1940	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	P 2,199
CEBU	5J - 125	Daily	DC9	0700	0730	P 1,879	P 1,539		

ORIGIN: BUTUAN

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 788	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	1115	1240	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 224/ +	Mo/We/Sa	DC9	1340	-	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
CEBU	5J - 224	Mo/We/Sa	DC9	1340	1420	P 1,839	P 1,499		
+ VIA Cebu 5J 568/ 570/ 572/ 574									

ORIGIN: ILOILO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 454	Daily	DC9	0800	0900	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 456	Daily	DC9	1135	1235	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 460	Daily	DC9	1700	1800	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	
	5J - 462	Daily	DC9	1830	1930	P 2,779	P 2,449	P 2,199	P 2,199
CEBU	5J - 161	Daily	DC9	0700	0735	P 2,099	P 1,759		
DAVAO	5J 161/593*	Daily	DC9	0700	0905	P 3,645	P 3,195	P 2,799	
** VIA Cebu*									

ORIGIN: TACLOBAN

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	PROMO	5-DAY ADVANCE
MANILA	5J - 652	Daily	DC9	0800	0910	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 656	Daily	DC9	1340	1450	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 658	Daily	DC9	1600	1710	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	

ORIGIN: ZAMBOANGA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 852	Daily	DC9	1050	1220	P 3,667	P 3,239	P 2,799	
CEBU	5J - 432	Mo/We/Fr/ Sa	DC9	0730	0825	P 2,649	P 2,319	P 2,199	
DAVAO	5J - 394	Tu/Th/Su	DC9	0730	0830	P 2,649	P 2,319	P 2,199	

ORIGIN: DUMAGUETE

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 626	Mo/We/Fr/ Su	DC9	0720	0830	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 628	Daily	DC9	1430	1540	P 2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	

ORIGIN: CAGAYAN DE ORO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 382	Daily	DC9	0715	0840	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 384	Daily	DC9	1135	1300	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	
	5J - 386	Daily	DC9	1305	1430	P 3,645	P 3,239	P 2,799	

ORIGIN: KALIBO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	GROUP	PROMO
MANILA	5J - 340	Daily	DC9	1050	1140	P2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	
	5J - 344	Daily	DC9	1455	1545	P2,899	P 2,569	P 2,199	

ORIGIN: PUERTO PRINCESA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	PROMO	5-DAY ADVANCE
MANILA	5J - 638	Daily	DC9	0900	1010	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
	5J - 228/+	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	1305	-	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
CEBU	5J - 228	Tu/Th/Fr/Su	DC9	1305	1415	P 2,899	P 2,499	P 2,199	
+ VIA Cebu 5J-568 / 570 /572 / 574									

ORIGIN: SUBIC

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ACFT	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES			
						NORMAL	VALUE	PROMO	5-DAY ADVANCE
MANILA	5J - 101	Fr	DC9	2030	2100		P 500		

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CEBU PACIFIC

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Speak up on Ho, FPJ dares Erap critics

By Carlito Pablo

CEBU CITY—The standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino yesterday challenged critics of deposed President Joseph Estrada to speak up on reports that gambling mogul Stanley Ho was again operating in the country with the supposed blessings of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"When Erap was President, they threw everything at him, anything about gambling," Fernando Poe Jr. told reporters in reference to his best friend. "What I can't understand is their approach, as those who opposed Erap with regards to gambling are not talking now."

Asked what he thought now about the Macapagal administration, which had been alleged as receiving a hefty campaign contribution from Ho, Poe said: "Well, it's obvious that they need money. I don't know where they're going to use it."

Does he believe that the money will be used against him in the campaign? "What do you think?" he said. "Perhaps. I don't know."

Poe said that as far as he was concerned, "gambling is the least priority."

"Pagcor (Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) has been helping a lot, and I hope their help will really reach the poor," he said.

Asked about his stand on *masiao*, the illegal numbers game prevalent in the Visayas, Poe said: "I don't know yet. I will still study it."

P700 million

Newsbreak magazine reported in its March 29 issue that Ho's men had plunked P700 million into Ms Macapagal's campaign chest in exchange for the green light on Ho's gambling projects in the country.

In a statement issued by the FPJ Media Bureau, lawyer Ed Araullo said Ms Macapagal should respond to the accusation herself.

"It is [her] turn to reply to 'I Accuse' allegations," said Araullo, convenor of the Kilos ng Bagong Umaga coalition. It was a reference to the title of the privilege speech of then Sen. Teofisto Guingona, in which he accused Estrada of pocketing payola from *jueteng*.

Araullo said Ms Macapagal was "gambling with the country's future" if she had indeed allowed the "behemoth K-4 machinery to be lubricated by Ho's grease money."

"Are the stones of the strong gambling republic she is building paid for by casino kings?" Araullo said. "I hope it is not because her vow to rule on strong moral grounds is void *ab initio* if she had made a pact with the devil."

Presidential adviser met, escorted Stanley Ho

From page A1

exercises" at the Angeles University Foundation (AUF), said Emmanuel Angeles, president of the Clark Development Corp.

Ho, however, was met at the airport by lawyer Dan Roleda, presidential adviser on foreign investments.

Roleda arrived in a marked government chopper and rode with Ho in a limousine to the Holiday Inn where the tycoon was billeted during his seven-hour visit. The media were not invited to any of the scheduled activities.

At the dinner hosted by the AUF at the Holiday Inn ballroom, Ho was seated beside former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa. Roleda was also present.

Roleda was later seen at the hotel lobby preparatory to Ho's departure.

Angeles said he had hosted Ho and the latter's party of 10 because it was the family-owned AUF that conferred on the businessman an honorary doctorate of humanities. ***(See related story on this page)***

"From the time of Dr. Ho's arrival up to his departure, it was only me who was with him," Angeles said, contesting reports that his guest had separately met with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Malacañang continued to deny any links between Ms Macapagal and the 82-year-old gambling mogul.

Her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye confirmed that Ms Macapagal was indeed at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga on Wednesday, but stressed that she was there mainly to take a break from her campaign sorties.

Bunye said Ms Macapagal chose to relax in her home province to squeeze in a meeting with local political leaders and put in a good word for her elder son, Vice Gov. Mikey Arroyo, who is running for a seat in Congress.

He said reports of the clandestine meeting between the President and Ho, wherein she supposedly approved the businessman's proposal for a casino project in the country, were "malicious."

Bunye also told reporters that Efraim Genuino, chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., had denied having met with Ho, or that the latter had applied for a franchise with Pagcor.

No deal

On Thursday, Bunye referred to Pagcor all questions on Ho's alleged renewed inroads in Philippine gaming. He said the matter involved "operational details" that Pagcor could readily expound on.

Yesterday, Edward "Dodie" King, head of Pagcor's PR, media and information department, said Genuino had neither met nor talked with Ho. "Maybe [Genuino] has not even seen the guy," King said in a phone interview.

King said Pagcor had not entered into any kind of agreement with Ho, who put up a floating casino-restaurant in Manila during the Estrada administration that he never got to inaugurate.

"We have had no dealings with Stanley Ho. Not in the past, not in the present," King declared, adding that Ho had not sought a meeting with Genuino and other Pagcor officials.

"We don't even have any information about his re-entry," King said.

And even if Ho applies for a permit, Pagcor will not allow him to operate a casino in the country, King said, adding:

"Only Pagcor can operate a casino in the Philippines. That's in our charter. We can't pass on our franchise to anybody. The Supreme Court has already ruled on this. He can't open a casino business here.

Pagcor operates 13 casinos, mostly located in hotels, nationwide.

From 1 to 8 p.m.

This is Emmanuel Angeles' account of Ho's visit:

He arrived at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark aboard his private jet at 1 p.m. on Monday.

He and his party stayed at the Holiday Inn some 5 kilometers west of the airport, and did not go to the White House, a mansion of US base commanders that now serves as the official residence of Philippine presidents whenever they come to Clark.

Ho did not go to the Tru-North tourism estate, where a casino supposedly owned by Estrada and his ally-turned accuser, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, is one of the attractions.

He left for Hong Kong at about 8 p.m. on Monday.

A source at the Air Transportation Office said Ho's jet took off at 9 p.m.

According to Angeles, Ms Macapagal arrived in Clark from the Visayas on Tuesday night for various meetings.

"How can they meet when they came from different schedules?" he said.

Angeles also said that Ho's visit was "not connected with the May 10 elections."

Reacting to reports that Ho had contributed to Ms Macapagal's campaign chest, Pagcor's King said: "It's all politically motivated. It's a political season, remember?"

'Nothing concrete'

On Ho's promise to invest more in the Philippines, which he announced in a speech during the conferment rites, Angeles said: "Nothing is concrete about that yet."

A check with Jess Nicdao, head of the Clark Development Corp.'s infrastructure committee, revealed that Ho or any of his firms had not proposed any business project in the area.

CDC vice president Jose Victor Luciano, who also heads the firm's business center, said he was "not privy" to any of Ho's business interests in Clark.

Told of some reports alleging that the conferment ceremony was only a cover for the other purposes of Ho's visit, Angeles said: "Not true."

He said that he met with Ho in Hong Kong last year and that the latter would have come for the conferment earlier.

"But his wife died last month, so he had to let the period of mourning pass," Angeles said.

He said Ho had agreed to join the AUF academic community because the businessman "knew some trustees." He did not name names.

In the list of the AUF board of trustees is Diosdado Macapagal Jr., Ms Macapagal's brother.

Macapagal Jr., who was not seen during Ho's conferment, replaced their father, President Diosdado Macapagal, as an AUF trustee upon the latter's death in 1998. with a report from gil cabacungan jr.

Bishop . . .

From page A1

Cruz sent a torn copy of the citation from the university through DHL yesterday with a note asking the AUF to permanently strike his name from its list.

"Ours must be a truly desperate economy. Even elementary decency would not welcome gambling investments with open arms, as now done in the country," Cruz said in a statement issued yesterday.

He said he had received information from "reliable sources" that the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.—which he called the "Philippine Gambling Corp."—was serving as the conduit of money coursed through investments from "the gambling tycoon."

Reuters said a "top gambling industry source" had confirmed Ho's hand in several gambling ventures.

"Ho is very keen to come back to the Philippines and has managed to get involved in several projects here," the source said.

More coming up

Cruz also warned that more casinos would soon open in the country, along with an Internet café corporation that would promote Internet gambling. But he did not elaborate.

"It is sad to know that a renowned figure in the world of gambling has been slowly but surely invading the Philippines," he said, and lamented that the Philippines was on its way to becoming the "outstanding gambling capital of Asia."

Last week, the archbishop challenged all presidential candidates to sign a commitment to fight *jueteng*, saying the illegal numbers game had cost the economy billions of pesos in revenue.

GMA's Metro sorties . . .

From page A1

One would think it was a Fernando Poe Jr. rally.

ABS-CBN talents Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda opened the Metro Manila campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her K4 coalition on Thursday, the day the campaign period for local candidates officially started.

Abunda and Aquino, hosts of the popular talk show "The Buzz", teased the crowd by dropping hints about Aquino's new love life and a reported budding romance between the network's Korina Sanchez and Mar Roxas, a senatorial bet in the K4 ticket

The President was not exempt from using the tried and tested formula for drawing—and holding—the crowd in her campaign rallies.

"Thank you Boy and Kris for coming here to the sixth district (of Manila)." she said at the proclamation rally of Manila's candidates at Plaza Balagtas in Pandacan, Manila.

After she declared that Kris was "in love," the outspoken Aquino volunteered that she was indeed, with "the son of someone in your ticket."

Ms Macapagal then told Roxas that the crowd was wondering where Korina Sanchez was. The crowd hooted when Roxas placed his hand on his chest, indicating his heart. Aquino reminded the President that she had promised to be a sponsor in the wedding of Sanchez and Roxas.

The showbiz agenda over, Abunda focused on the campaign, and asked why the President considers Pandacan important.

Standard pitch

"First of all, Pandacan is Malacañang's neighbor," she said. "And this is a place which symbolizes our goals for a change in the lives of the urban poor." Ms Macapagal then made her standard pitch that she deserved to be elected because she has the experience to lead the country to "unprecedented changes."

Abunda again asked the President who owns Aquino's heart these days, "warning" the loquacious actress not to lie because the President was the witness. But before Aquino could answer, the President intervened:

"She's not going to lie, but she's acting demure. She won't talk or identify (her love interest) especially since Mayor (Feliciano) Sonny Belmonte is around."

"Who knows, the mayor might court me tomorrow so let's not admit it, just yet," Aquino said. Reelectionist Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte had been linked to the actress earlier.

At the next rally in San Francisco del Monte, Belmonte picked up the Aquino teaser, asking the crowd if they would like Aquino to be the "first lady of Quezon City."

"My mom's house is nearby, you can ask for my hand," Aquino quipped.

Lapid's son

Abunda picks up the spiel. "You want something new? Let's call on Sen. (candidate) Lito Lapid. He's the one we should talk to. Governor, what can you say about your (future) daughter-in-law?," Abunda said.

"For me, Kris is A-OK," said Lapid. "My son Mark is single. You (Kris) are all right, we accept you. I will ask your mom for your hand," he told Aquino, to the crowd's delight. Lapid's son, said to be in his early 20s, is running for vice governor of Pampanga.

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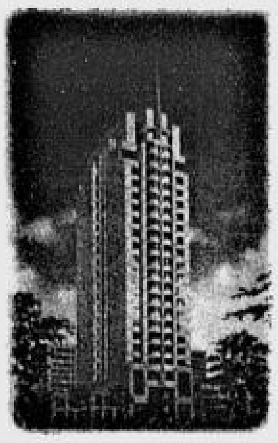

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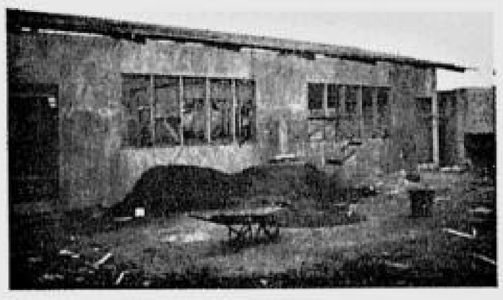
Classroom, Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad

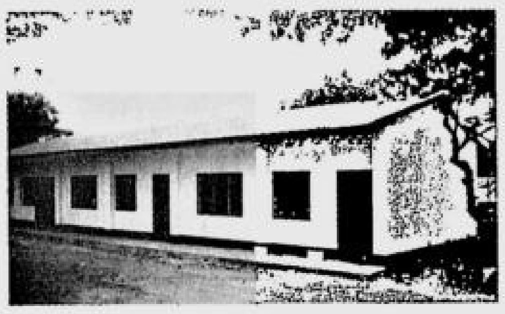
Ang CGMA ay isang pagtutulungang proyekto ng mga Kagawaran ng Paggawa at Panghanapbuhay, Ugnayang Panlabas, at Edukasyon, katuwang ang Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. Ito ay pinasimulan noong Hunyo 27, 2003.

Nilalayon ng CGMA na magtayo ng mga classrooms sa mga pampublikong paaralan sa elementarya at highschool sa lahat ng lugar sa Pilipinas na may kakulangan sa eskwelahan, sa pamamagitan ng tulong at kontribusyon ng ating mga kababayan sa abroad, mga pamayanang Pilipino, mga kumpanya sa loob at labas ng bansa, at mga grupong sibiko.

Ika-100 Classroom: Kaloob ng Filipino Community ng Switzerland

Isang samahan ng mga Pilipino sa Switzerland ang nag-ambag ng classroom para sa Dalipe Elementary School sa M'Lang, North Cotabato. Ito ang ika-100 classroom na kaloob sa ilalim ng CGMA Project.





Edukasyon para sa Kabataang Pilipino

Mabibiyayaan ng 100 classrooms ang mahigit sa 10,000 kabataang Pilipino na naghahangad makapag-aral. Para sa kanila, edukasyon ang tanging paraan upang makaahon sa kahirapan— at masilayan ang magandang kinabukasan. Sa kasalukuyan, 44,000 classrooms ang kinakailangan. Maraming kabataan ang nag-aaral sa kamalig, gusaling pawid at kugon, at kahit sa lilim ng punongkahoy.

Donasyon Mula sa Overseas Filipino Investors

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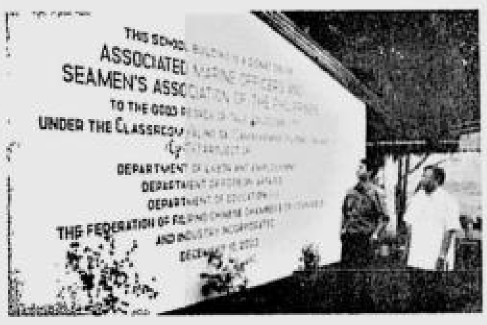

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Philippines
Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMUSOP)
CDO Foodsphere, Inc. Phils.
Cherub Manpower, Inc. / Veraluz Int'l. Corp. Phils.
Conference of Maritime Manning Agencies (COMMA)
Creamship Management Inc., Phils
HFS Philippines
Industrial Personnel and Management Services, Inc. (IPAMS), Phils.
InterOrient Maritime Enterprises Inc.
KCC Mart of Marbel, Koronadal
Lion's Club International District 301-A2 (Phils.)
Local Government Units (LGU), Polomolok, South Cotabato
Matsushita Group of Companies., Phils.
Mitsubishi Corporation Phils.
Nestle Philippines
Netship Management Inc.
Pfizer, Phils.
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Al Zubara Manpower Recruitment Agency/ Al Habeshi Int'l Recruitment Agency , UAE
Atef H. Ajjaoui, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Emirates Airlines, UAE
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Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel (FFCI)
Palmon (UAE) Ltd., UAE
Pilipino Community Mobilizers in Lebanon (c/o Alicia D. Santos)
Qatar Petroleum, Qatar
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Makita Co. Inc., Japan
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Mr. Hans Peter Holbach, Madrid, Spain
Pilipino Community in Marbella, Spain
Philippine Embassy and POLO, Athens, Greece
Samahan ng mga Pilipino sa Madrid, Spain

> ***"Sa dagdag na classrooms, natitiyak kong ang inyong mga anak ay maluwag at maginhawa nang makakapag-aral at mabilis na matututo. Ito naman talaga ang isa sa mga minimithi ko para sa ating mga anak at kabataan. Naniniwala ako na sa pamamagitan ng sapat at wastong edukasyon maibabangon ang ating bansa at maisusulong ang ating ganap na pag-unlad. Hinihiling ko sa inyo na alagaan ang ating mga paaralan kabilang na ang classrooms na ipinagkakaloob sa inyo ng CGMA."***
>
> **—Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo**

Makipag-alam sa Amin!

CGMA Project Management Office
Office of the Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US vetoes UN vote condemning Israel

UNITED NATIONS—The United States on Thursday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution by Arab nations to condemn Israel for assassinating Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin.

The Bush administration, alone among major powers in not condemning Monday's assassination as an extrajudicial killing, rejected the resolution because it did not also denounce Yassin's group Hamas for suicide bombings in Israel.

The vote was 11 in favor, three abstentions and the US veto.

"Israel's action has escalated tensions in Gaza and the region, and could set back our effort to resume progress toward peace," US Ambassador John Negroponte said in a statement before the vote.

"This Security Council does nothing to contribute to a peaceful settlement when it condemns one party's actions and turns a blind eye to everything else occurring in the region," Negroponte said.

Washington's "no" vote killed the resolution because it is one of the five permanent members of the council with veto power.

Britain, Germany and Romania abstained after Algeria, negotiating for Arab nations, rejected an amendment they wanted that would have condemned "atrocities" against Israelis.

The measure was supported by China, Russia, France, Angola, Chile, Pakistan, Spain, Algeria, Benin, Brazil and the Philippines.

Israel dismissed a growing international outcry over the assassination of Yassin, the quadriplegic spiritual leader of Hamas, killed in an air strike outside a mosque in Gaza City.

Hamas, which is bent on Israel's destruction, said it would target Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other top officials to avenge Yassin's death.

Khaled Meshaal, Hamas' political chief living in exile in Syria, said on Thursday attacks would be confined to Israel and the Palestinian territories despite US warnings to its citizens of a heightened security risk.

Israel, in turn, is vowing to kill more militant chiefs it sees as the masterminds behind suicide bombings carried out during a nearly 3-1/2-year Palestinian uprising.

At the United Nations, Palestinian representative Nasser al-Kidwa said, "The American position was beyond any ability to reach agreement on a text."

Negroponte had been ready to agree to a resolution that did not mention either Hamas or Israel but said the council was "deeply shocked" at Yassin's killing, according to a US draft. *Reuters*

RELIC ON TOUR

The ancient Egyptian mask of Tuyu is seen in this undated photo released by the Museum Of Antiquities, Basel, Switzerland. Outstanding artifacts from the tomb of Egyptian King Tutankhamen are on view at the Basel museum starting April 7. The artifacts will also be shown in the US, Japan and possibly China. AP

FBI warns of attacks on US oil refineries

HOUSTON—The FBI said on Thursday it had given Texas oil refiners a new warning about possible terror attacks coinciding with US elections in November, but reaction from the industry and world oil markets was muted.

The advisory, issued on Tuesday, was based on "very raw intelligence" from overseas sources, said Bob Doguim, spokesperson for the Houston FBI office.

"It was specific only to the extent that it was oil refineries and Texas," Doguim said. "Beyond that it is really very vague and we haven't been able to corroborate it yet."

Nonetheless, refiners were warned because it was "the responsible thing to do," he said.

A petroleum industry source who has seen the notification said, "The alert mentioned threats to pipelines and facilities in Texas to coincide with the election in November."

The source said there have been at least a half dozen of these types of warnings from the FBI in Texas since last summer. Texas is a major center of the US petroleum industry.

But there have been no known attempts to attack the numerous refineries and petrochemical plants that line the Houston Ship Channel and nearby Galveston Bay.

US retail gasoline prices soared to a record high this week on tight supplies, and any damage to a major refinery or pipeline would constrict supplies even more. But traders said security alerts such as this week's were common enough that they had little effect on markets. *Reuters*

Al-Qaida's No. 2 man wants Pakistanis to oust Musharraf

DUBAI—A defiant message apparently from Osama bin Laden's right-hand man called on Pakistanis on Thursday to overthrow their pro-American president—just days after Pakistan hinted its forces had the fugitive trapped.

In a new tape aired on Arabic Al Jazeera television and attributed to Ayman al-Zawahri, the al Qaida number two—believed hiding on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border—called President Pervez Musharraf "the traitor."

"I call on Muslims in Pakistan to get rid of their government which is working for Americans," said the voice on the audio-only tape, which sounded like Zawahri.

Pakistan, a key US ally in the "war on terror," has been waging a bloody campaign over the last fortnight to root out al-Qaida fighters in tandem with a US sweep on the other side of the Afghan frontier.

Pakistani officials said last week the fierce defense the militants were putting up suggested they were protecting a "high-value target," perhaps Zawahri, who Washington believes played a key role in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The military later rowed back, saying this was unfounded "guesswork" and the target might be a Chechen or Uzbek warlord.

Musharraf, who has to balance pressure from Washington with anti-US sentiment at home, narrowly escaped two assassination attempts in December blamed on Muslim militants.

The CIA, which said two similar messages last month were probably from Zawahri, was checking the tape's authenticity.

"Musharraf wants to stab the Muslim *jihad* (holy struggle) uprising in Afghanistan in the back," the voice said.

"The Pakistani people had offered a helping hand to their brothers in Afghanistan, that's why Americans delegated Musharraf to take revenge on the tribes along the border, especially the Pashtun."

Al Jazeera, which often receives tapes purportedly from Bin Laden and Zawahri, said it got the new message after Pakistan began its frontier military campaign but gave no more details.

No specific events to help date the tape were mentioned on it. *Reuters*

Bush challenges 9/11 testimony of former aide

NASHUA, N.H.—US President George W. Bush insisted on Thursday he had no advance warning of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks and challenged the assertions of a former aide who accused him of not placing a high enough priority on pursuing al-Qaida prior to the tragedy.

"Had I known that the enemy was going to use airplanes to strike America, to attack us, I would have used every resource, every asset, every power of the government, to protect the American people," Bush said, appearing with Cheryl McGinnis, the wife of a pilot killed in the attacks.

Counterterrorism expert Richard Clarke, who served the last four US presidents, said Bush did not take the threat of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization seriously and downgraded its importance in comparison to the administration of former President Bill Clinton. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Blair, Gadhafi fight al-Qaida

TRIPOLI—Britain's Tony Blair sealed Libya's return to the world community with a historic handshake with Moammar Gadhafi on Thursday and an agreement to fight al-Qaida together. After more than an hour of talks, the prime minister said Libya's rejection of banned weapons and rapprochement with the West could act as a template for other Arab nations to turn their back on Islamic extremism. "We are showing by our engagement with Libya today that it is possible for countries in the Arab world to work with the United States and the UK to defeat the common enemy of extremist fanatical terrorism driven by al-Qaida," he told reporters. *Reuters*

Spain arrests 5 more

MADRID—Spanish police have arrested five more people in connection with the Madrid train bombings that killed 190 people, raising the total number of suspects in detention to 18, officials said on Thursday. An interior ministry spokesperson said three people were arrested on Wednesday and two more on Thursday. But he could not comment on German media reports that at least one of them had lived in Darmstadt—which could be significant as the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on US cities were believed to have been planned in Spain and Germany. Eighteen people are now in custody as part of the probe into the deadliest bombing attack in Europe in 15 years. At least 13 of the suspects being held are from Morocco. *Reuters*

EU adopts tighter security

BRUSSELS—EU leaders Thursday adopted a raft of security measures in the wake of the Madrid bombings, notably appointing a new "anti-terrorism tsar" to coordinate action after the deadly blasts. In talks overshadowed by the Spanish massacre, the EU leaders named former Dutch deputy interior minister Gijs de Vries to the new post of counterterrorism coordinator. "We the European Union must be sure that everything that can be done to protect our citizens from the scourge of terrorism is done," Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, who was chairing the two-day EU summit, told reporters. The EU leaders also agreed to boost intelligence-sharing, cut funding to extremists and adopt an all-for-one solidarity clause *Reuters*

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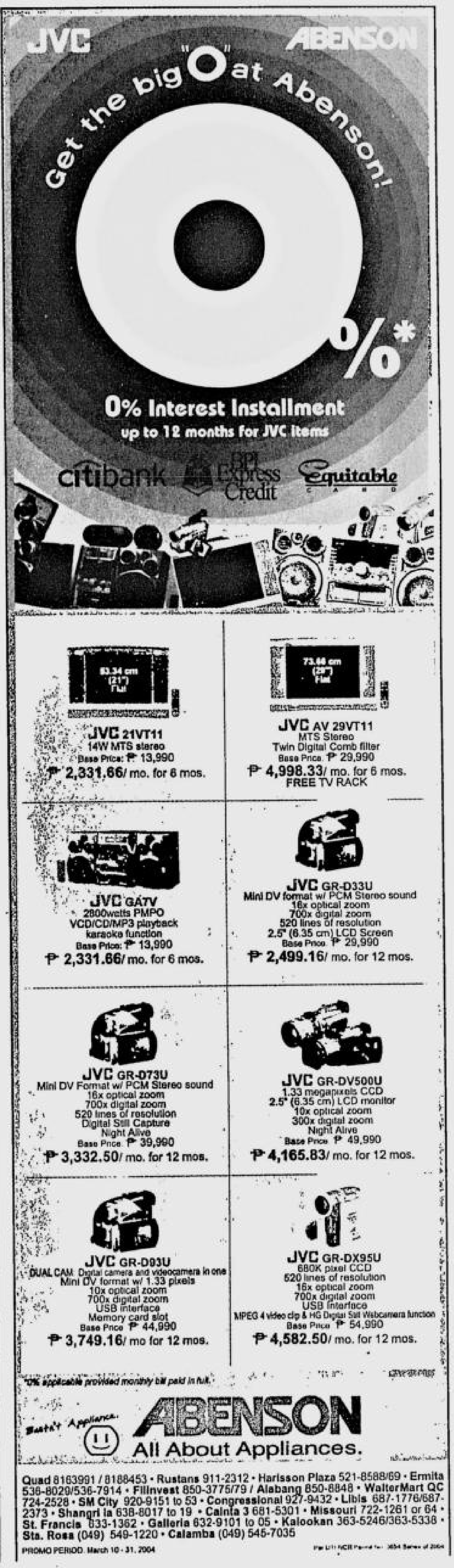

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portrait #7

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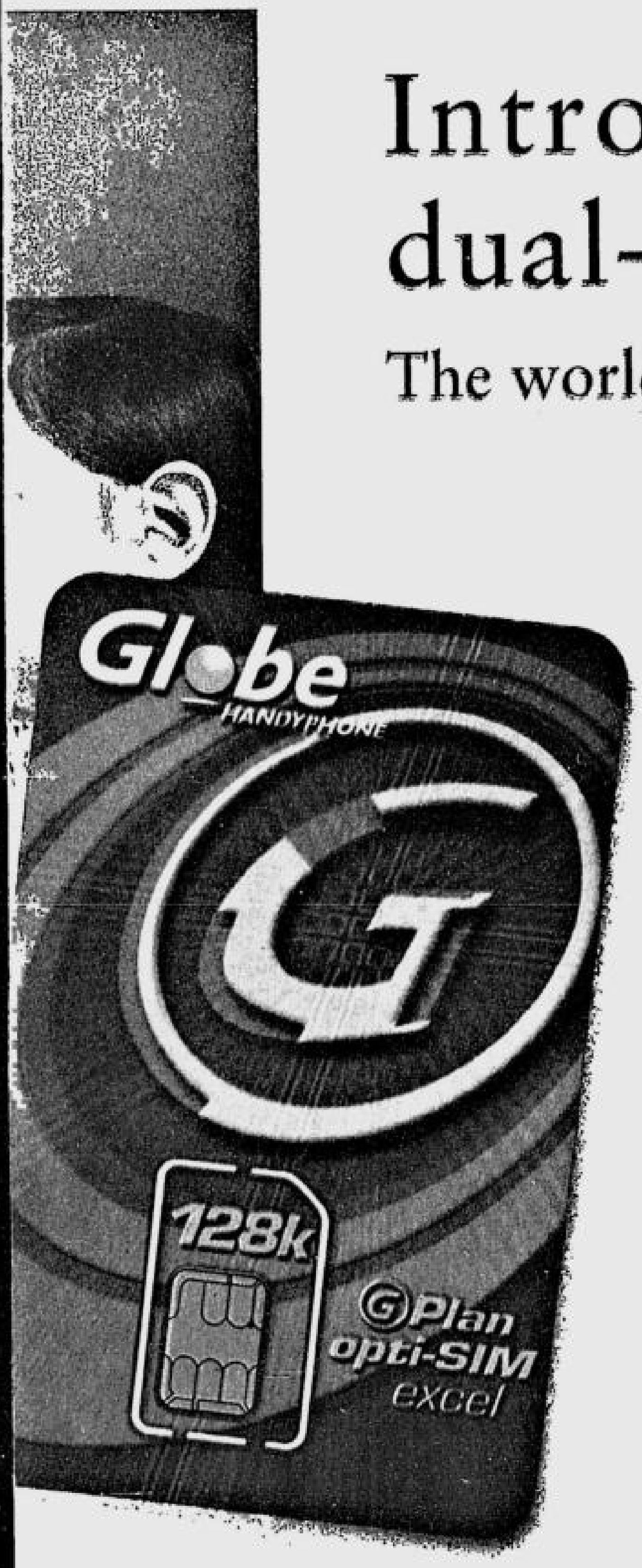

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OPINION

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Sex and advertising

EDITORIAL

THE CONTINUING refusal of Destileria Limtuaco and its advertising agency, the Sinson Lascano group, to pull out its offensive *"Nakatikim ka na ba ng 15 anyos?"* advertisement, is as obscene as the ad itself. They should be met with the kind of reception they will understand: an unresponsive market.

Earlier this month, the brandy maker's legal counsel upped the obscenity index when he defended the advertisement by calling its critics mentally ill. "The complaint is a (*sic*) pure and simple harassment. People suffering from severe psychosis tend to have a distorted sense of sight and thinking. Government agencies, especially the Department of Justice, should not countenance this form of psychosis," said Bonifacio Alentajan.

Then he added: "I can't understand that it [the ad's tagline] is malicious. Does it suggest child prostitution or child trafficking? Maybe they believed the shape of the bottle is similar to the body of a 15-year-old girl."

Alentajan is being obtuse. His choice of words reveals the inner sophist: "I can't understand." That is precisely the point: he refuses to understand that his company, acting on the egregious advice of its advertising agency, made a terrible mistake.

The tagline does not suggest child prostitution or child trafficking. It suggests child sex, sex with a minor—and that is bad enough. It is morally heinous, a crime against society; in fact, sex with a 15-year-old is statutory rape.

Alentajan, speaking for his company, brands the many critics of the advertisement as psychotic. Are we in fact reading too much into the tagline?

In plain and simple terms: No. The advertisement has a radio version which settles any and all doubts. In that radio ad, a man comes home late and is confronted by his wife. "Where have you been?" she asks. "I've heard you've gone crazy over a 15-year-old." To which the man replies: the 15-year-old is not a young woman but Napoleon Brandy.

As Destileria's own radio commercial proves, the controversial tagline is all about sexual innuendo.

In itself, this is nothing new. Sex continues to be used to sell a thousand products, a thousand services. For instance, a billboard may show a sexy, under-dressed woman selling a brand of car wax. There is no conceivable connection between the woman and the product, except sex appeal. People are drawn to the billboard, and users of the car wax may fancy themselves attracting sexy, under-dressed women.

All this is deplorable, but hardly remarkable. Many advertisements use sex to sell the sizzle. Where Napoleon Brandy got it all wrong was the kind of sexual innuendo it used. It was using child sex, an activity that is defined in the books as statutory rape, to sell itself.

If Alentajan does not see this, he may need to visit his psychiatrist.

This is not the first time that Napoleon Brandy has figured in a controversy. Before the *15-anyos* ad, it featured Sen. Panfilo Lacson as its product endorser. Nothing wrong with that, except that Lacson is known to be a teetotaler. In that commercial, truth in advertising went out the window. In the *15-anyos* ad, morality was thrown into the wastebasket.

Dead end

FOREIGN COMMENT

AND so here we are again, contemplating the way forward for a state that has—in defiance of world opinion—continued to stoke its own funeral pyre and now threatens to drag the whole of the Middle East down with it.

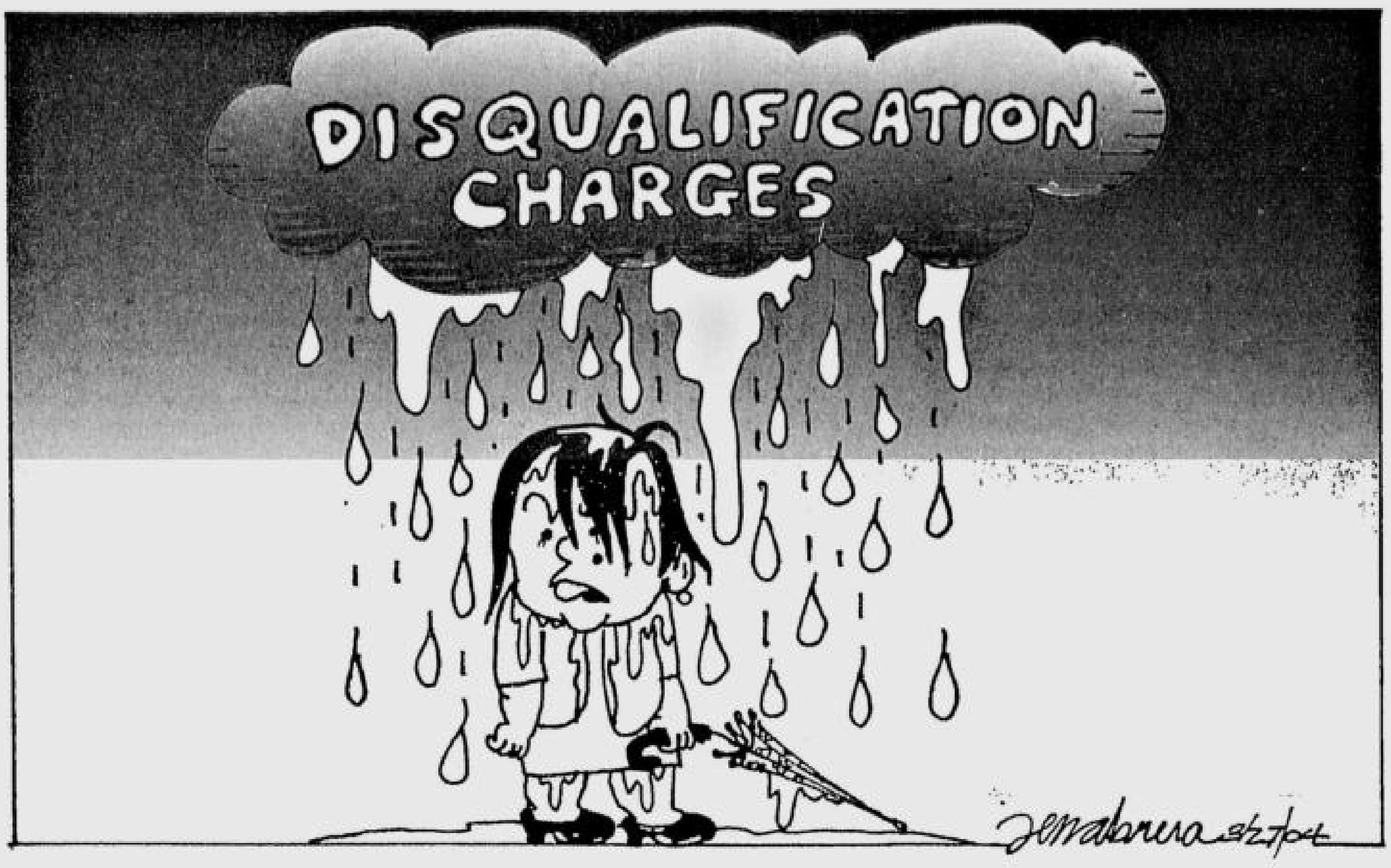
What now? Hamas will surely send in more suicide bombers, who will strike the only target within their range: Israeli civilians. Israel will send in its own killers and continue to punish the Palestinian people for their resistance. An eye for an eye.

But Israel should know by now that of all possible permutations toward peace, murdering Palestinian figures is the least likely to yield a solution.

The attempts of Israel and its most dogmatic supporters to paint all criticism of its actions as resurgent anti-Semitism will not wash. Indeed, if today the most risky place in the world to be a Jew is within Israel, it is largely the fault of the political and military course pursued by Ariel Sharon and company.

Israelis and Palestinians sorely need to grow a new political leadership that can begin to carve out peace in a single democratic society. The divided solutions of the present and the past are a dead end, not a road map.

ThisDay (Johannesburg, South Africa)



Public utility insolence

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

MY daughter Candy had an annoying problem with Meralco last Monday, March 22. A lineman went to her house at Antipolo City and told her he was there to cut off her electrical supply because she had not paid her electric bill. She protested and said she had done so except that her receipt was with her husband, who was in his office.

The man was courteous enough but said he could not heed her explanation or her request for time to produce the receipt because he had no authority to do so. His only instruction was to cut off the service. He said he had come only for that purpose and so, with much apology, did what he was told.

Fighting back tears of frustration and anger, Candy called up her husband to tell him of the disconnection. Tonio immediately contacted Meralco to inform it of his official receipt in payment of the current bill, in fact two days before it became due. Meralco checked its computer and found that he had really paid through a bank. The cut-off was a mistake.

The connection was eventually restored, but only after a delay of all of three and a half hours although there were other Meralco linemen in the area who could have restored the service earlier. Candy, who was in her house all the time, suffered much inconvenience and exasperation, not to say wrath, over the arbitrary action of the company.

I am sure there are similar incidents that have caused much indignation among mostly ignorant persons who do not know their rights under the law. Meralco has earned the scorn of the people because of its excesses as their monopolistic supplier of electricity. If it has often gotten off with its misconduct, it is because many of its victims have not taken the trouble to complain.

The recent much-applauded decision of the Supreme Court requiring Meralco to refund billions of pesos it has overcharged its customers underscores the cupidity of this haughty public utility. Its arrogance is unbelievable. Characteristically, it has introduced new charges to cover the refund or possibly, as some people suspect, only to spite the public. Protests have again spread over this latest insolence but Meralco couldn't care less.

Although former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile belongs to a notorious senatorial slate that includes many unreformed rascals, I am voting for him because of the stand he is taking against Meralco and its abuses. We need men like him in Congress to prevent the misdeeds of this company that apparently enjoys the protection of high authorities in the government.

Fortunately, the members of the Supreme Court do not appear to be among them. In Quisumbing v. Manila Electric Co., 380 SCRA 195, the high tribunal ruled on another wrong committed by the respondent company. The petitioners had complained that their electrical service had been disconnected without the required presence of a law officer or a representative of the Energy Regulation Administration. The Court held that Meralco had acted arbitrarily.

"Respondent had no legal right to immediately disconnect petitioners' electrical supply without observing the requisites of law which, in turn, are akin to due process," the Court said. "Had respondent been more circumspect and prudent, petitioners could have been given the opportunity to controvert the initial finding of alleged meter tampering."

The Court stressed that "the State may regulate, as it has done through Section 97 of the Revised Order No. 1 of the Public Service Commission, the conditions under which and the manner by which a public utility such as Meralco may effect a disconnection of service to a delinquent customer. Among others, a prior written notice to the customer is required before disconnection of the service. Failure to give such prior notice amounts to a tort."

The Court held that Meralco was liable in moral damages to the petitioners because of the violation of their right against deprivation of property without due process of law. It also awarded exemplary damages "not to enrich one party to impoverish another but to serve as a deterrent against or as a negative incentive to socially deleterious action. In this case, to serve an example—that before a disconnection of electrical supply can be affected by a public utility like Meralco, the requisites of law must be faithfully complied with."

Coming back to my daughter's case, Meralco bills contain written notice of disconnection if the account is not paid on time but asks that the notice be disregarded if payment has already been made. Since Tonio and Candy had already made payment when their electric supply was cut off, the disconnection was made without written notice because it had been canceled at Meralco's own request. The couple was therefore denied the protection of due process of law, which should be available against even mighty corporations like Meralco.

Congress should take a closer look at the operations of Meralco that have made the people its captive customers because of their dependence on its electric supply. As a public utility, Meralco should serve the public instead of exploiting and tyrannizing it.

Destroyed by politics

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

SWEETHEART deal. Bailout. Midnight agreement. Mismanagement. Political deal-making. Illegal collections. All these terms used in connection with the Maynilad-MWSS agreement (the so-called Amendment 2), with the benefits accruing to the Lopez family, and the costs being borne by the government, and by extension, the Filipino taxpayers.

This was the price that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo paid for getting Noli de Castro as her running mate.

This is the version which the Freedom From Debt Coalition is selling to all and sundry. This is the version which the political opposition—except for Bro. Eddie Villanueva—have adopted, and are selling to the voters.

Cheap shots. Ideology trumping knowledge. Conclusions impervious to facts.

Take the sweetheart deal. Benpres has to write off $80 million of investment, which is $20 million more than what it was required to invest under the concession agreement. The Lopezes are not only out of management; they are totally out of Maynilad.

The settlement agreement overtakes the rehabilitation petition pending in court that would enable Benpres to stay on, with Maynilad's liabilities, including those to the government, restructured into long-term loans. Under the settlement, the government gets P2.75 billion up front ($50 million from the performance bond) and advance payment of concession fees for 2004 of about P1 billion ("concession fees" actually means the debt service of the MWSS assigned to Maynilad and Manila Water). The balance of unpaid concession fees is converted to equity, in a company whose losses have been fully absorbed by Benpres and Ondeo. In short, a "new" Maynilad will have a "clean" balance sheet with a chance of being viable, and a protracted dispute involving foreign investment is avoided.

Bailout? It is true that Benpres is relieved from certain contingent guarantees of Maynilad loans. But the government is not assuming those guarantees. It is the banks who "share the pain" by a restructuring of their loans to Maynilad, mostly over seven years, and a cut in interest rates. The banks are also converting some loans into equity.

Midnight agreement? In 2000, Maynilad invoked the provision in the Concession Agreement (CA) allowing amendments for unforeseen developments, such as the Asian crisis which about doubled the peso requirements of the debt service inherited from the MWSS amounting to $800 million. Maynilad could recover forex losses under the CA, but over time, with interest. Given the lack of credit due to political and regulatory uncertainties, Maynilad finally got, in October 2001, after negotiations with two administrations, adjustment mechanisms through what is known as Amendment No. 1.

But politics again intervened. The government reneged on the adjustment scheduled for July 2002. Instead, the MWSS unilaterally adjusted the rates to a level that was insufficient to recover the forex losses. Maynilad has not implemented that increase. There is no so-called "illegal collections." In turn, Maynilad refused to pay any more concession fees. It had already paid $200 million before its liquidity crisis.

That was the basis for the arbitration proceedings which ended in November 2003 with a decision that neither party proved its case (no one won), leaving Maynilad with outstanding concession fees. That was when Maynilad filed, in effect, for bankruptcy.

Three years of negotiations and legal disputes. A settlement to make the March 22 deadline set by the court, after which the petition for rehabilitation was up for decision, where the government could end up without any cash or control of the company. Does that sound like a midnight deal?

Did the Lopezes bring it upon themselves by mismanaging the company?

The Ayalas bid the lowest for both zones, but could only win one. They chose East. Smart move. Makati was the Ayalas' domain and the allocation of debt service payments was lopsided: $800 million for West and $100 million for East. The second best bid in the West—that of Benpres—won. In the euphoria of the mid-1990s, the time bomb in the form of assumed MWSS debt service was largely ignored.

Moreover, it turned out that there were 3,700 km of pipes in the West, not 2,500 km, most of them old, some laid during Spanish times. Its non-revenue water was 69 percent, which was reduced to 65 percent but went up again to 69 percent when the cash ran out. Maynilad did not meet its capex requirements, nor its other deliverables fully, but neither did Manila Water (although it fared better). But Maynilad increased service coverage from 63 percent to 85 percent, water production from 1,600 million liters a day to over 2,200 and total service connections from 391,000 to 586,000. Of the increase of 194,000, 75,000 were in urban poor areas.

When Amendment 1 was subjected to public consultations in 2001, the usual ideologues asked for reverse privatization on the ground that basic services should be provided by the government at subsidized rates. They were silenced by the urban poor, led by the late Sr. Christine Tan of Leveriza, who said that the proposed water rates of Maynilad, which would enable them to be reached with running water, is about one-tenth the cost of buying water from vendors.

What is the lesson of Maynilad? Privatization does not work if the government is moved more by ideological agitation and populist politics than providing access to basic services through viable enterprises. Politics did not save Maynilad, it destroyed it.

'Bird in hand'—Salceda

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

DONALD Dee, executive vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), was quoted as saying that government's move to take over the debt-ridden Maynilad Water Services is "the best option" available, in order to ensure that water supply is not disrupted in half of the metropolis serviced by Maynilad. The PCCI said it supports President Macapagal-Arroyo's position, "given the information available in the media," but stressed the need for government to explain the terms of the deal to strip it of political color.

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As this column has stressed, the citizens may not know the whole picture yet, since the Lopez group and the MWSS, as well as the regional trial court to which the takeover plan was submitted are still talking. But what should comfort citizens is that approval of the rehabilitation plan is not dependent on one person but various agencies, including the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and the National Economic and Development Authority, and involves several steps before approval. But definitely the public deserves an explanation and the administration should do this soonest if it knows what's good for it. Still the opposition should also refrain from hurling irresponsible accusations at this point, as they could jeopardize the delivery of precious water this summer.

* * *

There are various schools of thought on this issue. Some businessmen, who are perhaps in a better position to understand it, have asked if it wouldn't be better for the government to just take the performance bond posted by Maynilad and its foreign partner, as a guarantee of payment for the unpaid concession fees, and simply terminate its contract. That bond is now valued at P6.6 billion, but reports say it's due to expire this June. In addition, it's still below the total concession fees on which Maynilad has defaulted since March 2001, amounting to about P350 million a month, forcing the MWSS to bleed for its payment. Seizing that bond would make government richer by P6.6 billion indeed, but my sources say this would mean that the MWSS and the Department of Finance would have to make a payment to Maynilad creditors of anywhere between P3 billion and P5 billion within 45 days—to be taken from the P6.6 billion performance bond. The remainder of P1.4 billion wouldn't be enough to offset the yearly P2.3 billion new concession fees.

* * *

Under the 2003 Maynilad proposal, its P5 billion equity would be preserved; but because its back concession fees of about P2.3 billion yearly would remain unpaid, the MWSS would have to assume those debts, further debilitating the agency. On the other hand, insiders maintain that under the new "compromise" plan, Maynilad will write off in government's favor its P8 billion investment (P2.75 billion in cash upfront and P5.247 billion in equity); but at the same time ensures continued viability of the new Maynilad to deliver water and pay off its debts.

* * *

Interruption of water services to the consumers would be a disaster for GMA in this campaign season. As she told the INQUIRER people during her visit a few weeks back, she realized that some 160,000 families in Metro Manila are without adequate water, which is why she launched her "Gloria Patubig Program." A disruption in the Maynilad sector would cause that huge figure to swell some more. The proposed compromise solution like GMA's "Patubig" program is geared toward the D and E classes. This is why they're making the political opposition very nervous.

* * *

The reorganization proposal before the court is said to be an alternative to what's deemed to be a very onerous plan submitted by Maynilad in November last year, which the government vigorously opposed. The deadlock prompted the arbitration panel to order Maynilad to pay its obligation and both sides to try to reach an "extra-judicial solution."

The facts may not all be in yet, but already, it's easy to understand why Albay Rep. Joey Salceda told the INQUIRER that "considering the circumstances, the government was better off with the deal than without it." He stressed that faced with a trade-off, the government chose to have the "bird in hand" rather than "more in the bush" in the future.

* * *

At the fourth death anniversary memorial rites for the late Speaker Ramon Mitra in Puerto Princesa last Saturday, former Agriculture Undersecretary Carlos Fernandez, a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California and the only Palaweño recruited by Mitra to the Department of Agriculture in 1986, recalled that his boss would have preferred to stay in the DA as he thought it was an excellent launching pad for his presidential ambitions. But President Cory Aquino wanted him to lead the House and shepherd her legislative agenda, so he ran in the 1987 elections and became speaker. Fernandez said that though Mitra served in the DA for just a year, he was able to initiate reforms there that until now are considered "without parallel," to quote his immediate successor, Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez.

Among Mitra's reforms Fernandez cited were: the dismantling of the sugar industry monopoly; the streamlining of tobacco industry administration by fusing six agencies into one; consolidation of all specialized agricultural loan programs into the Comprehensive Agri-Loan Fund; ending the NFA's monopoly in wheat; rationalizing and rehabilitating the system of rural banks; ending the coconut monopoly (of the group led by his friend Eduardo Cojuangco); bringing the National Irrigation Agency under the DA; creation of the Bureau of Agricultural Research to provide support R&D to the DA's programs, and of a nationwide network of private-sector dominated agricultural and fisheries councils for planning and policy formulation. And just as important was a new salary structure for the DA's front-liners.

GMA and the fear of an FPJ victory

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IS "FEAR" of an FPJ victory forcing voters to turn a blind eye to serious issues of governance against the administration?

Increasingly, we're hearing from thoughtful, concerned voters who have serious reservations about the future of the country in the event of a Poe victory that they would vote not for the candidate whom they truly believe in, but for the one who has the greatest chances of defeating Poe. The fear is that by voting for "weaker" candidates, or those who could not possibly defeat the KNP stalwart, voters would only in effect be assuring Poe of winning, as they would be dividing what would otherwise have been a "solid" vote against the actor.

Indeed, the lessons of 2001 and the election of Joseph Estrada in a crowded race are still fresh and raw.

Public opinion surveys have put FPJ and GMA in a dead-heat, with the other contenders trailing quite a distance behind. Simple logic would therefore dictate that for either Poe or the President to prevail, each must convince the sizeable number of "undecided" voters to commit to him or her, while convincing the partisans of any of the three trailing contenders to switch to either of them.

This then is the dilemma facing voters belonging to the "conscience bloc," those who still believe in the capacity of elections to usher in change or offer hope for our people. Dismayed by the prospect of the untried, inexperienced and inarticulate Fernando Poe Jr. being put in charge of the future of this country, they see themselves as having no choice but to support the incumbent. This, even as her recent record of governance leaves much cause for concern and dismay.

* * *

A DISILLUSIONED supporter of the President puts it succinctly: "We all fear FPJ so much that we keep quiet about President Macapagal-Arroyo who has betrayed everything that we fought for in Edsa. Of course, we fear FPJ, especially the evil people around him. But, it is not right to keep quiet when so many wrongs are being committed by a leader who wants us to put our trust in her to lead this country for another six years. Our young people need to see that there are still many of us who would dare speak out, even if the leading alternative scares the wits out of us."

The latest outrage for those who still clung to the President's promises of reform and transparency in government was the sacking of Bertie Lim, who has been described as "the only independent and incorruptible member of the Civil Aeronautics Board."

True, a massive black propaganda campaign had been waged against Lim, alleging among other things that by raising questions about the protective measures granted to the privately owned Philippine Air Lines, he was acting as an "agent" of foreign governments and airlines. But Lim has explained that his actions, as just one member of a collegial board, was precisely to protect the interests of the great majority of Filipino travelers as well as of industries dependent on travel and tourism. In essence, what Lim and other industry bodies advocate is the full implementation of the policy of liberalization in the air transport industry.

Filomeno Sta. Ana, in a column published in BusinessWorld, explains this policy as "paving the way for creating the favorable conditions to foster competition and competitiveness in the air transport industry." And for advocating this policy, while raising questions about the CAB's protective policies toward PAL, Lim was labeled an enemy of the people.

* * *

PERHAPS what doomed Lim's continued stay in the CAB was not that he was an "enemy of the people," but that Lucio Tan, owner of PAL, considered him an enemy.

It seems that for Tan, it is not enough that the majority of members of the CAB are on his side. Even the lone voice of dissent, even if that lone voice is raised in behalf of the traveling public, must be silenced. Sadly, Malacañang seems to share this view—and proved willing to jeopardize even the public interest to please an important funder and supporter.

The dismissal of Lim, done on the sly to minimize the political fallout, is but the latest of a series of concessions the President has made that could only be construed as a betrayal of the national interest. But because she is perceived as having the best chances against FPJ, even leaders of civil society are loath to denounce her actions or motivations, fearing it would only add more votes to the FPJ camp. Is this how low our ideals have fallen—victory at any cost, even if it is won by an undeserving leader?

Let me give the disillusioned GMA supporter the last word: "I think that what is more important is that we set examples to our young people so that we can guide them on what is right and what is wrong. We should never lose sight of this perspective. If FPJ wins because we spoke out… so be it… Perhaps we need one last fatal blow before we can all rise again to be the great nation we have dreamed to be."

* * *

V-DAY, an annual fund-raising event organized by the New Voice Company for groups working to end violence against women, goes onstage this evening at the Republic of Malate.

V-Day features excerpts from the international hit play "The Vagina Monologues" as well as songs, dances and presentations reflecting the reality of violence against women around the world. Women from the worlds of the stage, the arts, movies, television, the media and NGOs volunteer their time and talents each year for the cause of bringing an end to all forms of violence against women. This year's "V-Day" is extra special as it features mothers and daughters performing together. Tickets are on sale at P400, P300 and P250 and are available at the gate.

The archbishop's pound of flesh (1)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

IN 1686, the trip of the galleon Sto. Niño was suspended because of reports that outside the San Bernardino Strait the San Telmo, which was returning from Acapulco, had been attacked by seven pirate ships. Since two Dominicans had been earlier kidnapped from the Babuyan Islands by two frigates, the information seemed credible.

The Sto. Niño was refitted into a warship. New portholes were opened on its sides to install bronze cannons and it was provided with a thousand enlisted troops and accompanied by two other boats. They proceed to the strait, secured the San Telmo and then went on to search for the enemy—without success. Instead, they found the two frigates that had attacked the Babuyan Islands.

The general in command of the Sto. Niño, Tomas Endaya, was awarded the office of master of camp by the governor.

The Sto. Niño was dispatched the following year to Acapulco, under Gen. Lucas de Urquia, but the ship, weakened by the opening of her sides for portholes, was shipwrecked in November and could not finish the journey.

Because of this calamity, Manila suffered greatly from the lack of supplies, having furthermore lost the rice harvest rice due to floods, which also impeded the rehabilitation of the salt beds so that from 2 or 3 reales, the cost of a bushel of salt rose to P12.

More tragedies followed. A great fire destroyed many houses in the palisade on the night of Good Friday. The harvest was lean the following year, as a plague of locusts consumed the crop. This was followed by a flu epidemic that caused great damage, as there was hardly anyone to work in the fields with so many people falling sick.

Two years passed, and there were still no galleons to Mexico and no word of what was happening in Manila. So the viceroy decided that it was necessary to come to the aid of the colony. He sent a ship from Acapulco belonging to a resident of Callao, commanded by Gen. Antonio Astina.

Several court judges also arrived in Manila in 1688. The investigating judge discovered that many of the previous *audiencia* judges in Manila, who had been charged with various crimes by Archbishop Felipe Pardo, were dead. The only exception was Pedro Bolivar, who was being held prisoner in Cagayan. He was recalled to Manila, but the unfortunate man died on the way.

Another judge who died was Cristoval Grimaldos who, nearing death, declared that he had only done his duty to the Crown and to the Church in voting for the exile of the archbishop. (The whole controversy seems to have been a power play between church and state, with the archbishop being exiled to Lingayen in 1683. When the archbishop returned, he exacted his pound of flesh on everyone he believed to have acted against him.) Grimaldos, acting as a member of the Real Audiencia, believed his decision was not meant to offend the prelate and that he had acted according to the decrees and laws of the Crown and felt no guilt. He added that in the event that he was found guilty of some offense against the king or the prelates of the Church, he was willing to suffer the consequences and pay the penalties.

He had placed in his last will and testament a clause authorizing Fr. Isidoro Clarete, S.J., a theology professor at the university, to pay any fines imposed on him. He declared himself a faithful son of the Church in whose faith he abided until his death.

Grimaldos was buried in the Church of San Ignacio and because of this burial, the archbishop and some other members of his order (Dominican) judged that the church had been violated. He therefore ordered that the faithful were not to use the church. He also sought to have Grimaldos disinterred.

Some Dominicans who shared this opinion did not attend any of the feasts of the community for five years, although there had been no juridical declaration.

During this period, the Sinopolis bishop, Fr. Juan Duran, died. A few hours before his death, the archbishop told Duran not to insist on being buried in the church. The bishop answered that the violation was not clear since there had been no juridical declaration and said that he was not to be buried anywhere else.

The ecclesiastical court officiated at the burial without fear of the presumed violation, but the archbishop was not there to attend the daily Masses. To placate the archbishop, the vicar general threatened the Cabildo so that they would not attend the ceremonies which the Dominican community boycotted or the burial. They sang the response in the house where the bishop's body was lying in state

Before the master of camp, Fernando de Bobadilla, died, he mentioned twice in his last testament that he wished to be buried in the Jesuit church, prompting the archbishop to despotically revoke the last testament of the man so that he was buried in another church.

The pettiest perhaps was what the prior of Sto. Domingo, Fr. Bartolome Marron, did. Although it was prescribed that the route of the Good Friday procession would enter the church of San Ignacio, this had not been done for the past four years. That year, presiding over the procession, the prior put out the lighted candle he was holding and, with the other friars, went through another street.

A different path

YOUNG BLOOD

Grace Christine Sales

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

NOT so long ago, I had a different life. My parents wanted me to be involved in the family business. They had no choice. Ate wanted to be a doctor, Dad wanted my younger sister to become a lawyer and *bunso* wanted to be a pilot. Me? I took up business administration just for the heck of it.

Compared to my sisters who are high achievers academically, I am an average student. While my siblings were reaping medals, I was also winning titles in various beauty pageants. While my sisters didn't get involved with guys while they were in high school, I was already into my third relationship when I reached college. While my sisters busied themselves preparing for Math Olympiads and pop quizzes, I fancied forming an alternative rock band, with myself as the drummer.

Sibling rivalry was never an issue. We just had diverse interests, although my mother wished that I would concentrated more on academics rather on co-curricular activities. I was arrogant enough to declare that I would end up managing the business anyway, so I don't need to try so hard to have an impressive resumé.

Thus, my mother did not take me seriously when I told her a few years back that I wanted to take the law entrance exam. She told me in disbelief, "*Baka lawko-lawko.*" She dismissed the idea as just another scheme to get her off my back. Which was partly true, because being the ever-meddling mother that she was, I viewed her as a constant threat to my lively social life.

Mother remained unconvinced about my plan to study law. After all, I had been touted as the black sheep in the family for ruthlessly defying Church norms, as my mother defined them, the prodigal daughter who had been denied several times her allowances and the use of the car for abusing her gasoline privilege. I had also been grounded several times for partying to my heart's content. I had been predicted to marry before I was 18, a frequent school absentee and a two-time guest at the dean's office for misdemeanors. Name it, and I did it, except for sex and drugs, which probably put me in the category of the not-so-bad girls.

In the end, like the stubborn kid I was and without any clear intention of pursuing law, I went ahead and took the entrance exams, and passed.

But my idea of law school was far from what I had expected. I anticipated the usual lectures and skipping classes when they became boring. I planned on enjoying my newfound freedom away from my mother's eyes as well as the prestige attached to being a law student.

I was entirely clueless. On the first day of classes, the professor handed us a frightening list of cases which were to be discussed on our next meeting.

The next day, the "battle" began. A deck of class cards with every student's name written on it lay on the table. Our professor shuffled them, picked out one and started to ask questions later which were either lifted from a case, or some provisions of law, or simply practical questions and sometimes out-of-this-world questions, our answers to which, he insisted, should always have legal basis and be delivered in the most lawyerly manner.

I almost peed in my pants when I was called to recite the very first time. Somebody should have warned me that compared to recitation, listening to a lecture was the lesser evil. But no one in the family had a background in law.

Later it was hard explaining to them the significance of a 75 percent mark. I could not make them understand how, after losing so much sleep preparing for the next day's recitation, I would end up dumbfounded and sounding like an idiot when our professor started asking questions. I was constantly battling the impulse to just give up, knowing that I would never make it for a number of reasons.

I gave myself a year in law school. But then I learned to like the course and soon it became a passion. I developed a thirst for critical thinking and began to appreciate the beauty of applying the [illegible] precision on every case, on classroom discussions or on everyday living. I was reading faster, understanding better and learning to polish my English.

Being a late bloomer, I must have built a huge void in my brain, waiting to be filled up. So I had to read like crazy. Suddenly, I was less excited about going to the malls or watching movies. Momentarily, I stopped thinking about having a boyfriend—at least for a year.

Perhaps driven by my desire to gain social and family acceptance, I was determined to earn a law degree. For the first time in my life, I got serious with my studies. And in due time, my mother "promoted" me from black sheep to white sheep. (Gee, I'm forever grateful, Mom!) I found myself on a different career path.

Several years later, I was the only one in the family who had earned a second degree. Ate got married while she was in medical school and went on to handle the family business. She's now taking up nursing, and will soon be emigrating to Canada.

* * *

Grace Christine Sales, 28, works as a legal staff at the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

THEY SAID

Hoping

"I would like to expect support from everybody possible. That is what being a candidate is all about."

—President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressing hope of getting the support of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco

Key issue

"If they cannot present any clear program to address this crisis, then they have no business running for the presidency."

—Alliance of Progressive Labor chair Daniel Edralin, asking for the candidates' concrete plans to address rising unemployment

Failure to deliver

"He taught the proper mind-set and right motivation for the players. Unfortunately, he failed to deliver the results the management wanted."

—Shell basketball team manager Bobby Kanapi, speaking of head coach John Moran who was fired

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'Bird in hand'—Salceda

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

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As this column has stressed, the citizens may not know the whole picture yet, since the Lopez group and the MWSS, as well as the regional trial court to which the takeover plan was submitted are still talking. But what should comfort citizens is that approval of the rehabilitation plan is not dependent on one person but various agencies, including the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and the National Economic and Development Authority, and involves several steps before approval. But definitely the public deserves an explanation and the administration should do this soonest if it knows what's good for it. Still the opposition should also refrain from hurling irresponsible accusations at this point, as they could jeopardize the delivery of precious water this summer.

* * *

There are various schools of thought on this issue. Some businessmen, who are perhaps in a better position to understand it, have asked if it wouldn't be better for the government to just take the performance bond posted by Maynilad and its foreign partner, as a guarantee of payment for the unpaid concession fees, and simply terminate its contract. That bond is now valued at P6.6 billion, but reports say it's due to expire this June. In addition, it's still below the total concession fees on which Maynilad has defaulted since March 2001, amounting to about P350 million a month, forcing the MWSS to bleed for its payment. Seizing that bond would make government richer by P6.6 billion indeed, but my sources say this would mean that the MWSS and the Department of Finance would have to make a payment to Maynilad creditors of anywhere between P3 billion and P5 billion within 45 days—to be taken from the P6.6 billion performance bond. The remainder of P1.4 billion wouldn't be enough to offset the yearly P2.3 billion new concession fees.

* * *

Under the 2003 Maynilad proposal, its P5 billion equity would be preserved; but because its back concession fees of about P2.3 billion yearly would remain unpaid, the MWSS would have to assume those debts, further debilitating the agency. On the other hand, insiders maintain that under the new "compromise" plan, Maynilad will write off in government's favor its P8 billion investment (P2.75 billion in cash upfront and P5.247 billion in equity); but at the same time ensures continued viability of the new Maynilad to deliver water and pay off its debts.

* * *

Interruption of water services to the consumers would be a disaster for GMA in this campaign season. As she told the INQUIRER people during her visit a few weeks back, she realized that some 160,000 families in Metro Manila are without adequate water, which is why she launched her "Gloria Patubig Program." A disruption in the Maynilad sector would cause that huge figure to swell some more. The proposed compromise solution like GMA's "Patubig" program is geared toward the D and E classes. This is why they're making the political opposition very nervous.

* * *

The reorganization proposal before the court is said to be an alternative to what's deemed to be a very onerous plan submitted by Maynilad in November last year, which the government vigorously opposed. The deadlock prompted the arbitration panel to order Maynilad to pay its obligation and both sides to try to reach an "extra-judicial solution."

The facts may not all be in yet, but already, it's easy to understand why Albay Rep. Joey Salceda told the INQUIRER that "considering the circumstances, the government was better off with the deal than without it." He stressed that faced with a trade-off, the government chose to have the "bird in hand" rather than "more in the bush" in the future.

* * *

At the fourth death anniversary memorial rites for the late Speaker Ramon Mitra in Puerto Princesa last Saturday, former Agriculture Undersecretary Carlos Fernandez, a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California and the only Palaweño recruited by Mitra to the Department of Agriculture in 1986, recalled that his boss would have preferred to stay in the DA as he thought it was an excellent launching pad for his presidential ambitions. But President Cory Aquino wanted him to lead the House and shepherd her legislative agenda, so he ran in the 1987 elections and became speaker. Fernandez said that though Mitra served in the DA for just a year, he was able to initiate reforms there that until now are considered "without parallel," to quote his immediate successor, Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez.

Among Mitra's reforms Fernandez cited were: the dismantling of the sugar industry monopoly; the streamlining of tobacco industry administration by fusing six agencies into one; consolidation of all specialized agricultural loan programs into the Comprehensive Agri-Loan Fund; ending the NFA's monopoly in wheat; rationalizing and rehabilitating the system of rural banks; ending the coconut monopoly (of the group led by his friend Eduardo Cojuangco); bringing the National Irrigation Agency under the DA; creation of the Bureau of Agricultural Research to provide support R&D to the DA's programs, and of a nationwide network of private-sector dominated agricultural and fisheries councils for planning and policy formulation. And just as important was a new salary structure for the DA's front-liners.

GMA and the fear of an FPJ victory

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IS "FEAR" of an FPJ victory forcing voters to turn a blind eye to serious issues of governance against the administration?

Increasingly, we're hearing from thoughtful, concerned voters who have serious reservations about the future of the country in the event of a Poe victory that they would vote not for the candidate whom they truly believe in, but for the one who has the greatest chances of defeating Poe. The fear is that by voting for "weaker" candidates, or those who could not possibly defeat the KNP stalwart, voters would only in effect be assuring Poe of winning, as they would be dividing what would otherwise have been a "solid" vote against the actor.

Indeed, the lessons of 2001 and the election of Joseph Estrada in a crowded race are still fresh and raw.

Public opinion surveys have put FPJ and GMA in a dead-heat, with the other contenders trailing quite a distance behind. Simple logic would therefore dictate that for either Poe or the President to prevail, each must convince the sizeable number of "undecided" voters to commit to him or her, while convincing the partisans of any of the three trailing contenders to switch to either of them.

This then is the dilemma facing voters belonging to the "conscience bloc," those who still believe in the capacity of elections to usher in change or offer hope for our people. Dismayed by the prospect of the untried, inexperienced and inarticulate Fernando Poe Jr. being put in charge of the future of this country, they see themselves as having no choice but to support the incumbent. This, even as her recent record of governance leaves much cause for concern and dismay.

* * *

A DISILLUSIONED supporter of the President puts it succinctly: "We all fear FPJ so much that we keep quiet about President Macapagal-Arroyo who has betrayed everything that we fought for in Edsa. Of course, we fear FPJ, especially the evil people around him. But, it is not right to keep quiet when so many wrongs are being committed by a leader who wants us to put our trust in her to lead this country for another six years. Our young people need to see that there are still many of us who would dare speak out, even if the leading alternative scares the wits out of us."

The latest outrage for those who still clung to the President's promises of reform and transparency in government was the sacking of Bertie Lim, who has been described as "the only independent and incorruptible member of the Civil Aeronautics Board."

True, a massive black propaganda campaign had been waged against Lim, alleging among other things that by raising questions about the protective measures granted to the privately owned Philippine Air Lines, he was acting as an "agent" of foreign governments and airlines. But Lim has explained that his actions, as just one member of a collegial board, was precisely to protect the interests of the great majority of Filipino travelers as well as of industries dependent on travel and tourism. In essence, what Lim and other industry bodies advocate is the full implementation of the policy of liberalization in the air transport industry.

Filomeno Sta. Ana, in a column published in BusinessWorld, explains this policy as "paving the way for creating the favorable conditions to foster competition and competitiveness in the air transport industry." And for advocating this policy, while raising questions about the CAB's protective policies toward PAL, Lim was labeled an enemy of the people.

* * *

PERHAPS what doomed Lim's continued stay in the CAB was not that he was an "enemy of the people," but that Lucio Tan, owner of PAL, considered him an enemy.

It seems that for Tan, it is not enough that the majority of members of the CAB are on his side. Even the lone voice of dissent, even if that lone voice is raised in behalf of the traveling public, must be silenced. Sadly, Malacañang seems to share this view—and proved willing to jeopardize even the public interest to please an important funder and supporter.

The dismissal of Lim, done on the sly to minimize the political fallout, is but the latest of a series of concessions the President has made that could only be construed as a betrayal of the national interest. But because she is perceived as having the best chances against FPJ, even leaders of civil society are loath to denounce her actions or motivations, fearing it would only add more votes to the FPJ camp. Is this how low our ideals have fallen—victory at any cost, even if it is won by an undeserving leader?

Let me give the disillusioned GMA supporter the last word: "I think that what is more important is that we set examples to our young people so that we can guide them on what is right and what is wrong. We should never lose sight of this perspective. If FPJ wins because we spoke out... so be it... Perhaps we need one last fatal blow before we can all rise again to be the great nation we have dreamed to be."

* * *

V-DAY, an annual fund-raising event organized by the New Voice Company for groups working to end violence against women, goes onstage this evening at the Republic of Malate.

V-Day features excerpts from the international hit play "The Vagina Monologues" as well as songs, dances and presentations reflecting the reality of violence against women around the world. Women from the worlds of the stage, the arts, movies, television, the media and NGOs volunteer their time and talents each year for the cause of bringing an end to all forms of violence against women. This year's "V-Day" is extra special as it features mothers and daughters performing together. Tickets are on sale at P400, P300 and P250 and are available at the gate.

The archbishop's pound of flesh (1)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

IN 1686, the trip of the galleon Sto. Niño was suspended because of reports that outside the San Bernardino Strait the San Telmo, which was returning from Acapulco, had been attacked by seven pirate ships. Since two Dominicans had been earlier kidnapped from the Babuyan Islands by two frigates, the information seemed credible.

The Sto. Niño was refitted into a warship. New portholes were opened on its sides to install bronze cannons and it was provided with a thousand enlisted troops and accompanied by two other boats. They proceed to the strait, secured the San Telmo and then went on to search for the enemy—without success. Instead, they found the two frigates that had attacked the Babuyan Islands.

The general in command of the Sto. Niño, Tomas Endaya, was awarded the office of master of camp by the governor.

The Sto. Niño was dispatched the following year to Acapulco, under Gen. Lucas de Urquia, but the ship, weakened by the opening of her sides for portholes, was shipwrecked in November and could not finish the journey.

Because of this calamity, Manila suffered greatly from the lack of supplies, having furthermore lost the rice harvest rice due to floods, which also impeded the rehabilitation of the salt beds so that from 2 or 3 reales, the cost of a bushel of salt rose to P12.

More tragedies followed. A great fire destroyed many houses in the palisade on the night of Good Friday. The harvest was lean the following year, as a plague of locusts consumed the crop. This was followed by a flu epidemic that caused great damage, as there was hardly anyone to work in the fields with so many people falling sick.

Two years passed, and there were still no galleons to Mexico and no word of what was happening in Manila. So the viceroy decided that it was necessary to come to the aid of the colony. He sent a ship from Acapulco belonging to a resident of Callao, commanded by Gen. Antonio Astina.

Several court judges also arrived in Manila in 1688. The investigating judge discovered that many of the previous *audiencia* judges in Manila, who had been charged with various crimes by Archbishop Felipe Pardo, were dead. The only exception was Pedro Bolivar, who was being held prisoner in Cagayan. He was recalled to Manila, but the unfortunate man died on the way.

Another judge who died was Cristoval Grimaldos who, nearing death, declared that he had only done his duty to the Crown and to the Church in voting for the exile of the archbishop. (The whole controversy seems to have been a power play between church and state, with the archbishop being exiled to Lingayen in 1683. When the archbishop returned, he exacted his pound of flesh on everyone he believed to have acted against him.) Grimaldos, acting as a member of the Real Audiencia, believed his decision was not meant to offend the prelate and that he had acted according to the decrees and laws of the Crown and felt no guilt. He added that in the event that he was found guilty of some offense against the king or the prelates of the Church, he was willing to suffer the consequences and pay the penalties.

He had placed in his last will and testament a clause authorizing Fr. Isidoro Clarete, S.J., a theology professor at the university, to pay any fines imposed on him. He declared himself a faithful son of the Church in whose faith he abided until his death.

Grimaldos was buried in the Church of San Ignacio and because of this burial, the archbishop and some other members of his order (Dominican) judged that the church had been violated. He therefore ordered that the faithful were not to use the church. He also sought to have Grimaldos disinterred.

Some Dominicans who shared this opinion did not attend any of the feasts of the community for five years, although there had been no juridical declaration.

During this period, the Sinopolis bishop, Fr. Juan Duran, died. A few hours before his death, the archbishop told Duran not to insist on being buried in the church. The bishop answered that the violation was not clear since there had been no juridical declaration and said that he was not to be buried anywhere else.

The ecclesiastical court officiated at the burial without fear of the presumed violation, but the archbishop was not there to attend the daily Masses. To placate the archbishop, the vicar general threatened the Cabildo so that they would not attend the ceremonies which the Dominican community boycotted or the burial. They sang the response in the house where the bishop's body was lying in state.

Before the master of camp, Fernando de Bobadilla, died, he mentioned twice in his last testament that he wished to be buried in the Jesuit church, prompting the archbishop to despotically revoke the last testament of the man so that he was buried in another church.

The pettiest perhaps was what the prior of Sto. Domingo, Fr. Bartolome Marron, did. Although it was prescribed that the route of the Good Friday procession would enter the church of San Ignacio, this had not been done for the past four years. That year, presiding over the procession, the prior put out the lighted candle he was holding and, with the other friars, went through another street.

A different path

YOUNG BLOOD

Grace Christine Sales

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

NOT so long ago, I had a different life. My parents wanted me to be involved in the family business. They had no choice. Ate wanted to be a doctor, Dad wanted my younger sister to become a lawyer and *bunso* wanted to be a pilot. Me? I took up business administration just for the heck of it.

Compared to my sisters who are high achievers academically, I am an average student. While my siblings were reaping medals, I was also winning titles in various beauty pageants. While my sisters didn't get involved with guys while they were in high school, I was already into my third relationship when I reached college. While my sisters busied themselves preparing for Math Olympiads and pop quizzes, I fancied forming an alternative rock band, with myself as the drummer.

Sibling rivalry was never an issue. We just had diverse interests, although my mother wished that I would concentrated more on academics rather on co-curricular activities. I was arrogant enough to declare that I would end up managing the business anyway, so I don't need to try so hard to have an impressive resumé.

Thus, my mother did not take me seriously when I told her a few years back that I wanted to take the law entrance exam. She told me in disbelief, "*Baka lawko-lawko.*" She dismissed the idea as just another scheme to get her off my back. Which was partly true, because being the ever-meddling mother that she was, I viewed her as a constant threat to my lively social life.

Mother remained unconvinced about my plan to study law. After all, I had been touted as the black sheep in the family for ruthlessly defying Church norms, as my mother defined them, the prodigal daughter who had been denied several times her allowances and the use of the car for abusing her gasoline privilege. I had also been grounded several times for partying to my heart's content. I had been predicted to marry before I was 18, a frequent school absentee and a two-time guest at the dean's office for misdemeanors. Name it, and I did it, except for sex and drugs, which probably put me in the category of the not-so-bad girls.

In the end, like the stubborn kid I was and without any clear intention of pursuing law, I went ahead and took the entrance exams, and passed.

But my idea of law school was far from what I had expected. I anticipated the usual lectures and skipping classes when they became boring. I planned on enjoying my newfound freedom away from my mother's eyes as well as the prestige attached to being a law student.

I was entirely clueless. On the first day of classes, the professor handed us a frightening list of cases which were to be discussed on our next meeting.

The next day, the "battle" began. A deck of class cards with every student's name written on it lay on the table. Our professor shuffled them, picked out one and started to ask questions later which were either lifted from a case, or some provisions of law, or simply practical questions and sometimes out-of-this-world questions, our answers to which, he insisted, should always have legal basis and be delivered in the most lawyerly manner.

I almost peed in my pants when I was called to recite the very first time. Somebody should have warned me that compared to recitation, listening to a lecture was the lesser evil. But no one in the family had a background in law.

Later it was hard explaining to them the significance of a 75 percent mark. I could not make them understand how, after losing so much sleep preparing for the next day's recitation, I would end up dumbfounded and sounding like an idiot when our professor started asking questions. I was constantly battling the impulse to just give up, knowing that I would never make it for a number of reasons.

I gave myself a year in law school. But then I learned to like the course and soon it became a passion. I developed a thirst for critical thinking and began to appreciate the beauty of applying the law with precision on every case, on classroom discussions or on everyday living. I was reading faster, understanding better and learning to polish my English.

Being a late bloomer, I must have built a huge void in my brain, waiting to be filled up. So I had to read like crazy. Suddenly, I was less excited about going to the malls or watching movies. Momentarily, I stopped thinking about having a boyfriend—at least for a year.

Perhaps driven by my desire to gain social and family acceptance, I was determined to earn a law degree. For the first time in my life, I got serious with my studies. And in due time, my mother "promoted" me from black sheep to white sheep. (Gee, I'm forever grateful, Mom!) I found myself on a different career path.

Several years later, I was the only one in the family who had earned a second degree. Ate got married while she was in medical school and went on to handle the family business. She's now taking up nursing, and will soon be emigrating to Canada.

Grace Christine Sales, 28, works as a legal staff at the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

THEY SAID

Hoping

"I would like to expect support from everybody possible. That is what being a candidate is all about."

—President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressing hope of getting the support of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco

Key issue

"If they cannot present any clear program to address this crisis, then they have no business running for the presidency."

—Alliance of Progressive Labor chair Daniel Edralin, asking for the candidates' concrete plans to address rising unemployment

Failure to deliver

"He taught the proper mind-set and right motivation for the players. Unfortunately, he failed to deliver the results the management wanted."

—Shell basketball team manager Bobby Kanapi, speaking of head coach John Moran who was fired

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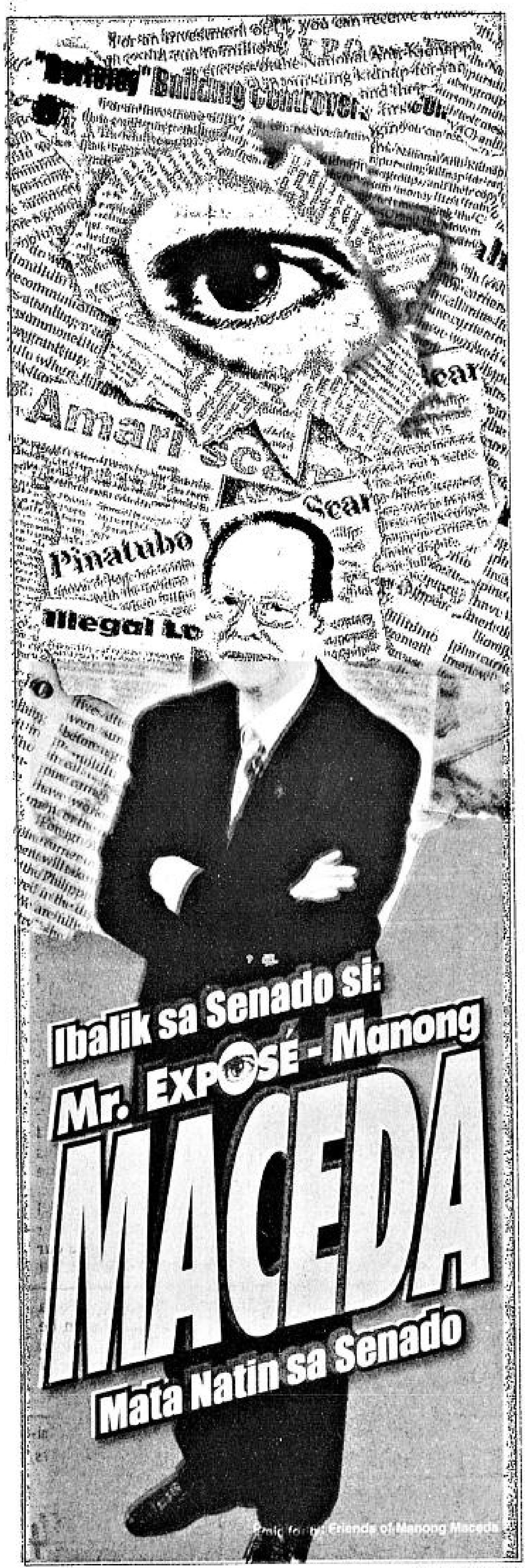


PAID ADVERTISEMENT

PCSO help for health insurance

I WRITE in defense of my person and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, so unfairly berated by Conrado de Quiros in his column "There's the Rub," last March 15.

De Quiros claims in his column that he had heard our statements on radio and TV countering the allegations of electioneering leveled against us and, yet, his column is filled with unwarranted questions and his own allegations which would seem to indicate he wasn't aware of the other facts we have been trying to point out.

Allow me to reiterate the following:

- RA 7875, otherwise known as the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP), was promulgated in 1995 and provides for an Indigent Program which was started in 1997.
- The Indigent Program mandates that the premium costs for the enrollment of indigent families to the NHIP, shall be shared between the national government and the LGUs.
- The PCSO is mandated to raise revenues and provide funds for health programs, medical assistance and services and charities of national character, thus, the Indigent Program for health insurance is well within the purview of its mandated undertakings.
- As early as 2001, President Macapagal-Arroyo, in her first State of the Nation Address, committed to implement the Indigent Program of the NHIP.
- The PCSO was tapped, way back in 2002, to assist the implementation of the Indigent Program by subsidizing the LGU counterpart in the premium costs for indigent enrollees.
- Initially, in 2002, the PCSO board and management approved a P60-million fund which was to partially subsidize the LGU premium counterparts. A reassessment of the program indicated the need to enhance the program and allocate a bigger fund.

The PCSO's participation in the program did not just start during this campaign period and was not designed to serve as a campaign strategy for President Macapagal. In fact, the health cards (printed and distributed by PhilHealth, not PCSO) are given only to qualified indigent beneficiaries who may not even be qualified voters.

De Quiros said he has heard me on TV and radio "unrelentingly advertise the project" yet, obviously, he is referring to our corporate advertising material, aired on PCSO-sponsored TV and radio programs, which depicts PCSO's institutional services and programs in general and ending with my call for unity and cooperation for the accomplishment of President Macapagal's vision of a strong republic. De Quiros sees this as "ass-licking," little understanding that it is incumbent upon the PCSO, being an agency under the Office of the President, to support the policy pronouncements and priority agenda of the President.

De Quiros seems to have a fixation on government funds as being his money as a taxpayer. Not all government funds are taxpayers' money/tax revenues, as in the case of PCSO funds which are generated purely from its gaming operations. Nevertheless, let me assure him that whatever revenues the PCSO generates go back to our people in terms of assistance, services and programs like the Health Insurance Program for the indigent.

—MA. LIVIA S. DE LEON,
chair, Philippine Charity
Sweepstakes Office,
PCSO Complex,
E. Rodriguez Avenue, QC

Revitalizing Banaue district

AS an environmental planner, I am fully in favor of the implementation of a place improvement project in Banaue District, Quezon City.

The place, once a clean and peaceful residential community, is now fast becoming a glaring example of a deteriorating environment. The proliferation of squatters and the uncontrolled operation of automobile repair shops in the area have adversely affected the sanitation, public safety and smooth movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the area.

A part of "Banaue Sana Laging Malinis Ka" project being coordinated by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the project includes the conduct of thorough fix and cleanup drives; sidewalk clearing, restoration and rehabilitation; development of pay parking areas; and construction of standard pedestrian walkways with lighting fixtures that will vibrantly light up the entire area at night.

Through the concerted efforts of the establishment owners, residents and local officials, Banaue will once more become an accessible, safe and environmentally desirable destination for visitors and clients. It will certainly improve the landscape and enhance its character as a premier automobile parts and car accessories center in the entire metropolis.

—RAUL D. VERCELES,
Construction and Equipment
Maintenance Office, Metropolitan
Manila Development Authority,
Edsa cor. Orense St.,
Guadalupe, Makati City

Debunking Osmeña's tirade against UP

WE, the undersigned members of the UP Manila Chancellor's Advisory Council composed of the deans, directors and other faculty administrators, strongly object to the statements made by Sen. John Osmeña in a one-page advertisement published in the INQUIRER last March 4, 2004.

In blocking the passage of the bill for a new University of the Philippines Charter, Senator Osmeña oversimplifies the issue to the benefit of UP president Francisco Nemenzo albeit without basis. He claims that Senate Bill 2587 is not a legislative gift to the university but represents a "juicy retirement check for the overstaying UP president."

This is not to defend Nemenzo, as he can very well do it himself, but to set the record straight for the information of the constituents. The granting of retirement pay covers only the years served until age 65. Even if the bill is approved, the UP president is not entitled to the vast retirement pay the senator is alluding to in his letter since it does not cover the extension years.

We also take issue with his accusation that in the said bill, UP wants to be "above the law." While some provisions of the bill seek to exempt UP from the Salary Standardization Law and from payment of taxes on imports of teaching and research materials, these are being sought to enhance the university's capability to be more competitive in the region, particularly in faculty recruitment and retention. It is important to note that the SSL has been granted to other government schools while the tax import exemption has also been granted to some private institutions.

Moreover, we wish to debunk his charge that UP is a "university of the rich." To increase access to a UP education, especially to students from the regions, UP has been implementing the equity-excellence ratio for many years now. This program allots 20 percent of admission slots to applicants coming from the provinces. Other programs being instituted to democratize admission include the regionalization program of the UP College of Medicine and the step-ladder curriculum of the Leyte-based School of Health Sciences.

Senator Osmeña tends to interpret figures at their face value and not situate these within their proper context, as when he singled out the 1,000-student enrollment in Mindanao. UP Mindanao was, in fact, opened in 1995 with a small budget and inadequate faculty items, thus it cannot possibly accommodate more students.

This is also to stress that just as children of a farmer have every right to study at UP if admitted, so are the children of a senator or any other Filipino for that matter, whether or not he can afford to send them to other expensive schools.

Lastly, we appeal to our legislators to view UP in a broader perspective in the light of its essential role and contributions to the nation during the past 95 years and its continued fulfillment of its goals of national leadership and activism.

—WITH 27 SIGNATORIES,
Members of the UP Manila
Chancellor's Advisory Council,
Padre Faura, Manila

Legarda and teachers' interests

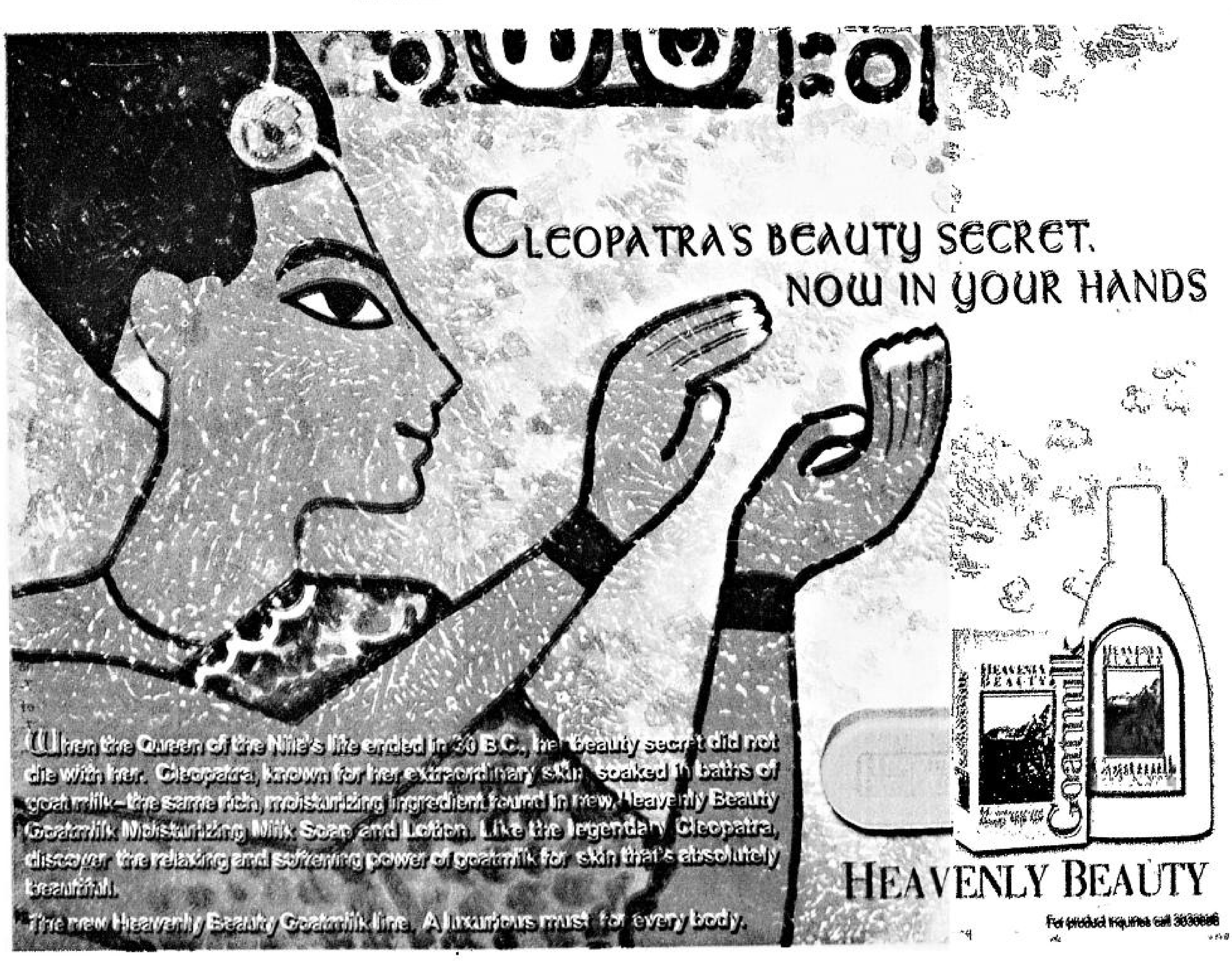
AS a public school teacher, I would like to express my appreciation for Sen. Loren Legarda for introducing a bill in Congress reducing the regular working load of teachers from the regular 6-8 hours a day to only 2.4 hours a day or 12 hours per week.

In Senate Bill 579, which she filed in the upper chamber, she also provided for payment of additional compensation based on regular basic pay for extra work for teachers plus 25 percent overtime pay. She also proposed that the remuneration and benefits of teachers in private institutions should be raised to the level of those in public institutions.

I believe that this bill would not only benefit teachers in both public and private educational institutions, it would also raise the quality of education. With a smaller working load, teachers will be able to make better preparations for their classroom work. With more academic freedom, they would be able to choose the methods, techniques and materials of teaching best suited to their students.

If Legarda is elected vice president, I would suggest that Congress pass her bill just the same. It is good for the educators; it is good for the country.

—JULPHA LAYAG,
92-D National Highway,
Barangay Balibago,
Sta. Rosa, Laguna



When the Queen of the Nile's life ended in 30 B.C., her beauty secret did not die with her. Cleopatra, known for her extraordinary skin, soaked in baths of goat milk–the same rich, moisturizing ingredient found in new Heavenly Beauty Goatmilk Moisturizing Milk Soap and Lotion. Like the legendary Cleopatra, discover the relaxing and softening power of goatmilk for skin that's absolutely beautiful.

The new Heavenly Beauty Goatmilk line. A luxurious must for every body.

For product inquiries call 3030888

Respect is earned

I CAN'T understand why there is this recurring talk that former President Joseph Estrada should be treated with the respect due a former president.

Precisely because he was our president and he betrayed that trust, makes his misdeeds more reprehensible.

Respect is earned. It is not something that comes with a position.

—EUFEMIA C.
ESTRADA,
San Juan, MM

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C. Luzon drivers plan 3-day strike

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—About 300,000 bus, jeepney and tricycle drivers in Central Luzon have started preparations for a three-day transport strike on March 29 to 31 to demand a P1-fare increase and a rollback in oil prices.

Tom Talavera, spokesperson of the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator (Stop) in Central Luzon, said the protest begins at 1 a.m. Monday and ends at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Talavera said the region-wide strike, the second since February, is planned on the heels of what he called "government's inaction" on the demands of drivers whose daily net income has diminished to P100 as the cost of fuel rose by an additional P7 per liter.

"The Macapagal administration is too callous. There are valid bases for a fare increase and rollback in prices of petroleum. There have been consistent clamor but the government, instead of heeding these, chose not to act, resorted to delaying tactics and allowed oil companies to increase prices again," he said.

He said the increase in fuel prices was contrary to what Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza promised transport leaders earlier.

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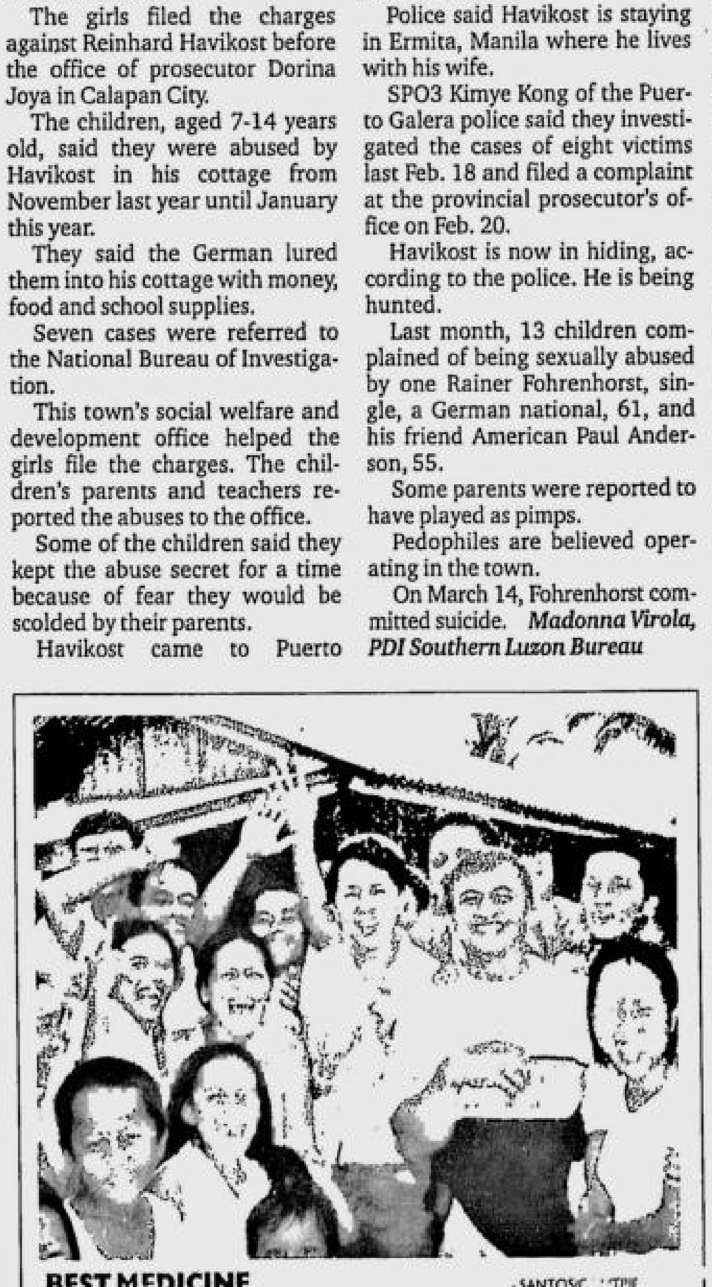

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April 14-18, 2004, Teachers' Camp, Baguio City

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Earth Music Fusion
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Plenary Sessions:
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C. Luzon drivers plan 3-day strike

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—About 300,000 bus, jeepney and tricycle drivers in Central Luzon have started preparations for a three-day transport strike on March 29 to 31 to demand a P1-fare increase and a rollback in oil prices.

Tom Talavera, spokesperson of the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator (Stop) in Central Luzon, said the protest begins at 1 a.m. Monday and ends at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

Talavera said the region-wide strike, the second since February, is planned on the heels of what he called "government's inaction" on the demands of drivers whose daily net income has diminished to P100 as the cost of fuel rose by an additional P7 per liter.

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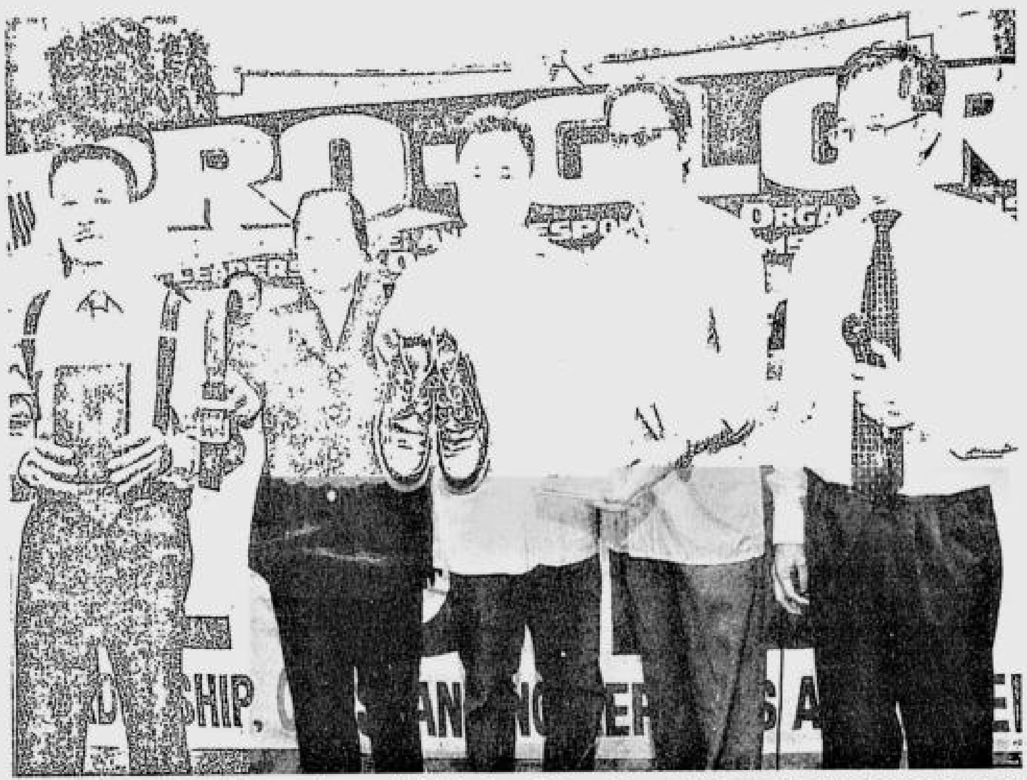

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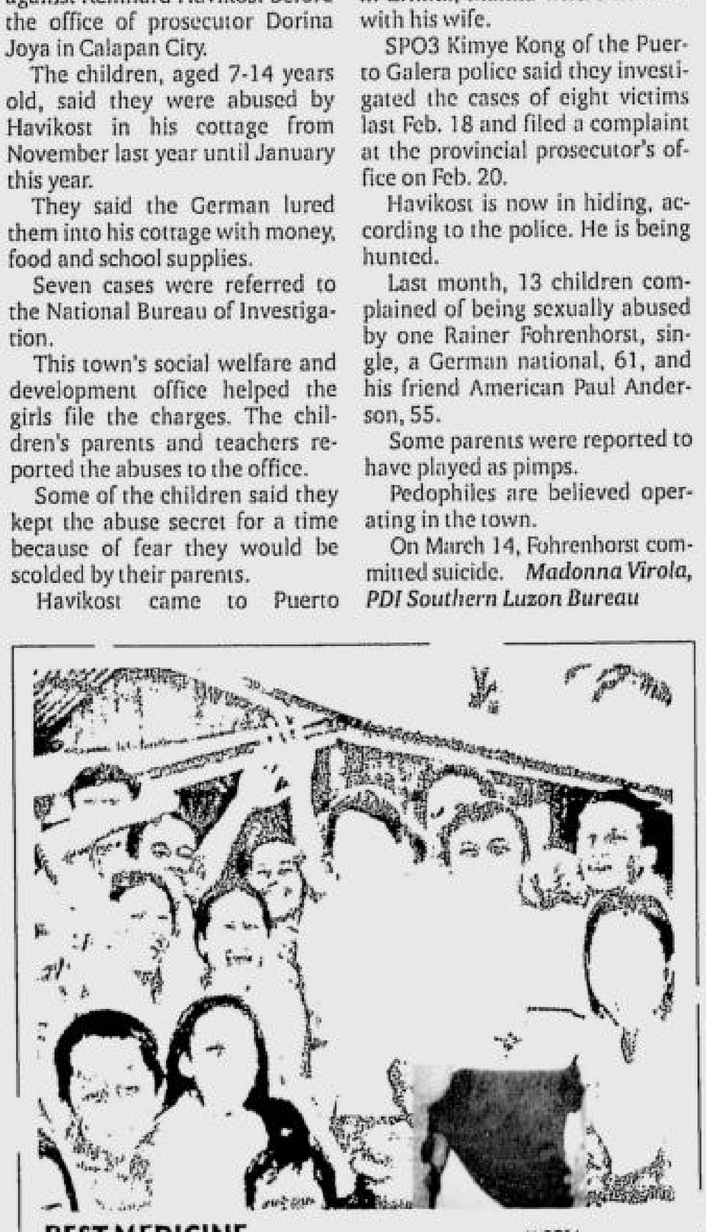

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Village awaits homecoming of twins

By Carla P. Gomez
Silay City, Negros Occidental

IN A REMOTE village here, a lighted candle has become a symbol of hope for the grandparents of conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre.

The constantly lit candle has been placed at the family altar where an image of the Holy Child Jesus and pictures of the twins stand.

For their grandparents, the candle represents an undying faith that the two boys will come home someday, separately walking on their feet.

"That light is like our hope that never dies," said Evelindia Aguirre, 55.

Evelindia and husband, Fernando, 55, live in a small house at Hacienda Paz-Matagoy, Barangay Rizal, about three kilometers from the city proper, where electricity has not reached the homes of some 91 families.

Their daughter Azela lives with them. Her husband Noel Malunes is working as a security guard in Manila. The youngest son Andy, a computer graduate, has yet to find a stable job.

Evelindia used to work as a payroll clerk in an agriculture-based company but decided to resign in 2002 to take care of the twins because the twins' mother and eldest daughter, Arlene, could not take care of them by herself.

She recalled that it pained her to see them lying on their backs unable to walk because they are connected at the head.

"They could not play with other children and it took two people to hold them," she said.

A hammock-like crib

Fernando, a former truck driver, had to make a makeshift crib for the twins made of bamboo that he hung to the beams of the roof of the house with a rope like a hammock so it with be easier to rock them to sleep.

Evelindia said her husband misses the twins so much now that they are in New York to undergo a series of procedures for their final separation.

She said he gets misty-eyed whenever he hears people talk about Carl and Clarence.

The 22-month-old Carl and Clarence are craniopagus (head to head) twins. They share bones in the skull and some portions of the brain surface. But they have separate bodies.

They recently underwent a third operation at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore, New York, part of a series of procedures that will ultimately lead to their separation.

If all goes well, the final separation could take place in May.

After the third operation, Robert Marion, the twins' lead pediatrician, noticed "no neurological problems evident and the boys are in really perfect condition."

He also noticed one interesting thing about the boys.

"They have different sleep patterns. Carl and Clarence sleep at different times."

"The problem with that, is when Carl tries to sleep, Clarence keeps trying to wake him by doing his, by now famous, wiggle dance. When Clarence is sleeping, Carl lets him and just continues to play with his ever present slinky toy," Marion said.

A journey

Their journey to New York City was not easy, for their mother Arlene, a single parent.

Arlene was working as a nurse of a company in Manila when she gave birth to Carl and Clarence at the Philippine General Hospital on April 21, 2002.

She, however, found it difficult to raise the twins alone in Manila. She gave up her job and went home to Silay, about 14 km south of Bacolod City, on Aug. 17, 2002.

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Dr. Debbie Lim, Silay City Health Officer, brought the case of the twins to the attention of the Philippine Pediatrics Society-Negros Occidental where Dr. Ceres Baldevia-Gay is a member.

Gay brought the need to have the twins surgically separated to Philippine Airlines Foundation executive director Ma. Carmen Sarmiento who, in turn, found ways to get them medical help.

THE AGUIRRE twins in file photo.

PDI PHOTO

At that time, Sarmiento recalled, the twins were almost a year old and were severely malnourished. They were also suffering from chronic aspiration pneumonia.

Sarmiento got in touch with Dorita Holland Urratta, Connecticut program manager of the Children's Chance Foundation, who sought the help of Dr. James Goodrich of Montefiore.

Last year, Arlene and the twins left for New York where Carl and Clarence would be given a chance to have a new life as separate individuals.

The operations in Montefiore would cost millions of dollars but these are being done *pro bono* by the hospital and their doctors.

Homesick

Arlene occasionally calls her parents through cellular phone to let them know how they are doing.

Sarmiento recently visited the Aguirres in their village to take a video of them and the rest of the relatives and neighbors to be sent to a homesick Arlene to remind her that they are all rooting for the twins.

Yes, their neighbors as well as their relatives in Silay are praying for the success of the doctors in far away New York City.

An aunt, Monserat Lorido, 52, said her constant prayer is that the twins will be successfully separated.

Feleciana Mamerto, 71, another aunt, said they are planning to hold a fiesta in their village once the twins come home.

"Whatever we can afford, we will cook for that occasion because it will be a day to celebrate," she said.

Even in Sunday Masses, the priests here always remember to pray for the twins, said Evelindia.

"We are very thankful to all those who are helping the twins, my daughter could never have been able to afford the operations for their separation with her salary as a nurse," she said.

Every time the twins are up for surgery, Evelindia said she offers a dozen eggs at the Carmelite Monastery in Bacolod City for the doctor's success. Her family also gathers around their altar to pray.

"We can't do much for them out here, but we can continue to hope and pray," the twins grandmother said.

But prayers do move mountains.

STORM HEAVEN!

people power has a spiritual dimension

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March 31 to May 9, 2004

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WHEN Within the 40-day period from March 31 to May 9, 2004

HOW Fill up the registration form below

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Lord, I come to you on bended knees to plead that your Holy Spirit intervene in the coming elections.
We experienced your Mighty Hand at EDSA, where peace was gained against all adversities. And now,
we come to you again for the following intentions:

- That every Filipino citizen shall exercise responsibly his right & duty to vote
- To ensure the conduct of honest, orderly and peaceful elections
- To ensure the safety of all polling personnel, teachers, watchers, candidates and their supporters
- To thwart all works of evil, divisiveness, strife, discord, greed and deception
- That the result of the elections be accepted peacefully by the people
- That the elected leaders embrace public service that is God-fearing and selfless
- That reconciliation, healing and unity come upon the people
- That the Will of God prevail and righteousness reign in the land.

Lord, huar our prayer!

SEND THIS

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I will devote my time to pray for our country, and for the will of God to prevail in the elections.

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	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
MAY	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
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Negros politics

LUCID INTERVAL
Rowena V. Guanzon

THE RULEMAKERS, a book published by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) written by Sheila Coronel, Yvonne Chua, et al., tells about how the wealthy dominate Congress.

Congressmen have been getting younger since 1946, and get richer each year. People already know that, but the book confirms it with accurate data. It also says that it is getting more expensive to pass laws.

In the 12th Congress, only 76 laws were passed, while the cost of maintaining Congress was about P11.2 billion. Coronel et al. did not study how long it takes to pass laws in our country, or they would have confirmed that women's rights and environment take the slow burner.

It took nearly a decade to pass the recent Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 and the Anti-Rape Law of 1997.

Nervous congressmen should buy The Rulemakers, if only to find out if the authors wrote something about them that people don't already know.

Although they give us a nationwide perspective, Coronel et al. might as well have been writing about Negros Occidental, where, since the Spanish rule, political power has been and still is in the hands of landowners. If there are two major paths to political seats, one through money and the other through the media, perhaps over time only TV stars, newscasters and radio anchormen can break the landowners' strong grip in the province.

But the political formula, meaning, money plus more money, is unlikely to change unless the province develops a strong middle class, the source of independent votes. That is a long way to go unless at least half of our working population becomes overseas Filipino workers.

In The Rulemakers, former Ambassador Danding Cojuangco stands out as the foremost political leader of Negros Occidental today. Danding has replaced the Montelibanos and the Gustilos, who were also Ferdinand Marcos' allies during martial law. Not only is Danding a lot wealthier than the two, he does not rely only on political power. Rather, his economic power is the source of his political power and not vice versa.

If in 1989 when Danding has just returned to Negros, he was viewed with suspicion by the province's elite. Now reality stares them in the face. Danding Cojuangco is the political leader in the province, and has won landed allies to his side because of his success both in agriculture and in politics.

The proof of the strength of his party, the Nationalist People's Coalition, is the fact that the major political seats in the province are held by their party leaders or allies almost without contest.

Gov. Joseph Maranon is opposed by Duds Locsin, a non-government organization advocate for environmental protection, while his vice governor is unopposed. In the second district, the incumbent board members are unopposed, while Thirdie, the son of three-term Freddie Maranon is taking his place, also unopposed. With this scenario, whoever Danding supports for President will get the third largest vote-rich province in the country.

In Negros Occidental, political power is generally held by the same families, except for newcomers like Rep. Jun Lozada of the fifth district who won a seat because of the support of former President Fidel Ramos. For local seats, it is not surprising to see the same family names every three years. It is only in Bacolod that has a high urban population, increasing middle class, access to the media and the site of colleges and universities where the pattern of political families was broken.

Since the death of former Rep. Romeo Guanzon and the defeat of the Montelibanos, Bacolod has elected mayors from the educated middle class, among them the popular Oscar Verdeflor in 1998, who suffered a stroke before finishing his term. The way they run the city, however, is not much different than the representatives or agents of the traditional political bosses.

Patronage is still the name of the game. And so it is everywhere in the country.

Completely untrue, says DOJ usec

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee yesterday vehemently denied that the government was pushing for a takeover of the Maynilad Water Services to avert a collapse of the Lopez business empire.

Teehankee told the INQUIRER that it was "completely untrue" that he warned the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System board of trustees against drawing on Maynilad's $120-million performance bond as it would bring harm to other Lopez-owned companies.

"I can reliably tell you that it is completely untrue. That never played a factor. Benpres is already in rehabilitation mode," Teehankee said in a text message.

"That would be purely speculative and you should have a source for such a reckless statement," he added.

He said the government and the MWSS have even requested the Supreme Court to resolve early Maynilad's petition seeking to prevent the government from drawing on the bond.

An INQUIRER source said that while the MWSS board has issued such a resolution, the Office of the Government Corporate Council has not filed a petition asking the high court to expedite the case.

Be fair

"I'll check with OGCC but definitely we are for early resolution. Please be fair. We are doing our jobs to the best of our ability," Teehankee said.

He said the government was committed "to doing its public duty and acting in sober balanced fashion keeping in mind consumer welfare and fiscal accountability and responsibility."

"MWSS has litigated aggressively for three years and has been winning but, to date, no payment has been made so the MWSS and government has consistently been acting to preserve all legal rights and remedies," Teehankee said.

"Government is clear in papers filed in court that it is fully confident of its legal position and its eventual legal victory," he added.

Reorganization plan

He said the reorganization plan was submitted to meet the Quezon City regional court's deadline for a settlement last Tuesday and "was expressly made without prejudice to government position that it has full legal rights to draw on bond."

"The reorganization plan is premised on the rehabilitation court's discretion under current laws and public interest in protecting against disruption of essential services to water consumers, without favoring any particular private interests," Teehankee said.

Deal seen to preempt high court

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Maynilad with which it has been locked in a legal dispute since December 2003 when the Lopez-controlled firm announced that it was ending its 25-year concession agreement with the MWSS to supply water to the western zone of Metro Manila.

Court injunctions

After it filed for the termination of the concession, Maynilad has through a series of court injunctions stopped the MWSS from drawing from its $120 million performance bond to pay for its concession fees.

Under the terms of the planned agreement, the government has waived the right to collect on the entire amount of the performance bond to pay for about P8 billion in unpaid Maynilad concession fees, agreeing to convert this into equity.

This will result in the MWSS ending up as the largest shareholder in Maynilad, a joint venture of the Lopez group's Benpres Holdings and the French-based Ondeo Phil.

According to the source, Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee told the MWSS board of trustees last year that if the government were to draw from the performance bond, which was guaranteed by Benpres and Ondeo, there would be a "cross default" of the loans of other Lopez-owned companies.

A cross default means that these loans, which allegedly run into millions of dollars, would become "due and demandable" by the creditor banks.

"[Teehankee] was warning the board that if it draws on the performance bond, the other Lopez companies will collapse. This would have a domino effect on the other Lopez companies," the source said.

Benpres guarantee

Teehankee implied that Benpres, the Lopez holding company, had guaranteed the loans of other Lopez-owned companies like the Manila Electric Co., ABS-CBN television and the North Luzon Expressway tollway project, and these loans would be affected by the cross-default provision, the source said.

"Most of the banks involved in Maynilad are also the banks involved in these other Lopez companies," he said.

Teehankee said this was "completely untrue." *(See related story above)*

The source said the Supreme Court was expected to rule soon on the Maynilad petition and this was what the administration was trying hard to preempt with its deal with the Lopezes.

Bottom line

"The bottom line is to dissuade the SC from ruling on the issue of drawing on the bond. Because if the SC rules that the MWSS could draw on the $120 million bond, there is no more room for compromise. It would be clearly in violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act if the board continues to refuse to draw [from the bond]," the source said.

While the high court cannot be stopped from ruling on the petition, the source said that since there already is a settlement there would be enough basis for the high court not to rule on the issue.

He said the deal can only be dropped or its terms changed if the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, the finance department, the National Economic Development Authority and the Securities and Exchange Commission were to reject it.

But the chances of that happening was "50-50" as the President has said not even a court can stop the government from taking over Maynilad, the source said.

Businessmen want to review deal

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry has asked for a meeting with Maynilad executives to discuss the terms of its deal with the government as it said media reports have left some issues unclear.

The meeting would give the PCCI board which is seeking to review the deal an idea of what the agreement is all about, PCCI executive vice president Donald G. Dee said in a phone interview.

He said much of the PCCI's knowledge of the deal was based on the "bits and pieces" from newspaper reports.

Dee stressed that he was not questioning the government's planned takeover of Maynilad per se, but of its assumption of the utility's liabilities.

Disagree with process

"We agree with the government's decision to take over Maynilad to ensure smooth water operations, but we disagree with the process. Does it end up paying everything? Why should we pay for its debts? It's a private company," he added.

The PCCI wanted to discuss the takeover with Maynilad executives in a more sober forum because the matter had been reduced to a mere "political issue" in the newspapers, he said.

"It's becoming a free-for-all in the political arena. It's not a political issue. Without intending to solve it, they're saying it's a political issue. It's not right. It's not fair," he said.

Dee earlier asked Maynilad to furnish the PCCI a copy of the planned agreement as well as its balance sheet and list of creditors. These will be analyzed by a panel of PCCI bankers and lawyers. The PCCI will then issue its position on the deal.

"We're not doing this to sow confusion, we are fighting for a principle that the government should not end up paying the company's debts," Dee said.

Being politicized

Administration Sen. Ramon Magsaysay said he believed the Maynilad issue was "being politicized."

Magsaysay said the government had to intervene with "some kind of bail-out" or water services would be affected.

He said the announcement of a bailout plan was just a question of "bad timing."

"If it were not the Lopezes, let's say if it were Gokongwei or maybe George Ty of Metro Bank, I think it will not be as controversial," Magsaysay said.

The President yesterday went dramatic on the Maynilad issue, declaring that she was prepared to go to prison if that was what it would take to provide a stable supply of clean water to the masses.

GMA to jail if ...

"I would rather go to jail than see people without clean water," said Ms Macapagal during the launch of a "Patubig" project in Parañaque City.

"Our aim was to protect the people's right to clean water in the long term and we will continue to fight this cause. Nothing short of a court order shall deter me from doing my duty to serve the people," she said.

Lawyer Melanio Mauricio Jr., a senatorial candidate in Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, has charged the President with graft for allegedly causing undue disadvantage to the government and unwarranted gains to Maynilad in the state's planned takeover of the water utility.

Aside from her willingness to face the consequences of her endorsement of the deal, the President also said she wanted more transparency on the issue.

"I am for transparency under the rule of law and commercial integrity. If there is any document to be opened then let it be done under conditions defined by the court. We have nothing to hide and government acted in the public interest at all stages of the transaction," she said.

Missing essential point

The President's dramatics drew a rejoinder from Roco.

"In her befuddled nature, she has missed the point completely. She's trying to obfuscate the issue... She's trying hard to make the people miss the essential issue," Roco said in a phone call to the INQUIRER.

The real issue is that the Maynilad's liabilities would be borne by consumers, Roco said.

"The government can take control of Maynilad without paying the loans of the Lopezes. It can provide water by running Maynilad correctly," he said.

Administration Rep. Prospero Pichay today decried the opposition's "misuse" of the Maynilad issue to hit at the President.

The Surigao del Sur congressman said the graft charges filed by the opposition against the President over the Maynilad deal were "not only premature, but entirely unwarranted and tainted with the stigma of dirty partisan politics."

Pichay cited the opinion of legal luminaries like former Court of Appeals Justice Jesus Elbinias that those who filed the charges would themselves be open to criminal charges for malicious prosecution.

Pichay reiterated that the administration was right to have moved swiftly to ensure there would not be any disruption in water supply for more than half of Metro Manila, the service area of Maynilad. He also challenged the opposition to come up with their own alternative to the proposed deal.

'Black propaganda'

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo yesterday came to the defense of Sen. Noli de Castro whose decision to run as President Macapagal-Arroyo's vice presidential running mate has been linked to the alleged "sweetheart deal" inked between the President and the Lopez family.

"The decision to run for vice president was Noli's decision alone and no one else," Arroyo told Senate reporters.

"[De Castro] could have run for president because he was also leading the polls for president but he did not. So how could you say that he was being used by the President and the Lopezes as chattel?" said Arroyo.

He said the allegations were mere black propaganda. Arroyo and De Castro belong to the so-called Wednesday Group in the Senate, a bloc of senators that included Senators Manuel Villar Jr., Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Dolphy staying 'home,' for now

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discretion of Dolphy whether to disclose the matter or portions of the discussion," Manalastas had said.

ABS-CBN executive vice president for news and public affairs, Ricardo "Dong" Puno, in a statement Thursday, said the network "categorically denies" that the program "Home Along Da Airport" had been canceled.

"The program's principal star, veteran and beloved comedian Dolphy, has not been axed. Taping of the program has been held on schedule and the program will continue airing in its regular time slot," Puno added.

Taping resumed

Dolphy resumed taping for his highly rated "Home Along Da Airport" weekly show on Wednesday and Thursday. The taping was covered live by ABS-CBN's late night news program "Insider" last Wednesday.

The news program aired interviews with Dolphy's co-stars Nova Villa and Smokey Manoloto. Villa and Manoloto play wife and son, respectively, to Dolphy's character Kevin Cosme in the show.

The network appeared conciliatory with the comedy king, another industry source said.

The Lopez-Dolphy meeting took place in the wake of a controversy sparked by reports from several industry sources that top executives of ABS-CBN wanted the sitcom's lead actor to "retire." The decision to "retire" the country's comedy king reportedly stemmed from his support of Poe's candidacy in the May 10 presidential election.

Several days ago, the INQUIRER reported that an ABS-CBN executive had offered Dolphy "another show that he will not be able to refuse" but that the comedian declined.

Malicious

Puno, in his own statement, deplored what he said was a "malicious treatment given by certain irresponsible media" to previous private talks between Dolphy and network executives, saying such meetings were normal practice at ABS-CBN.

"Yes, there were discussions. Such discussions are always held in confidence in order to encourage a free and candid exchange of ideas," he said.

With no basis but the speculation of partisan people and politicians, "these irresponsible media practitioners have maliciously maligned ABS-CBN by falsely claiming that our respected and beloved Dolphy was sacked because of his support of a candidate in the race for the presidency," Puno said.

DOLPHY

He said "this orgy of hysterical speculation" was followed "by screaming, again without an iota of proof, that Dolphy's supposed ouster—which was their own fabricated story—was part of a sinister deal."

Treasured

Puno said that Dolphy would be always treasured by the ABS-CBN family.

Demolition experts

"This relationship will stand whatever intrigues, political or otherwise, are sowed by hired hacks, demolition experts and irresponsible media."

After news broke that ABS-CBN was "sacking" Dolphy, three television production companies indicated interest in hiring his services, an industry insider said.

The insider said that Associate Broadcasting Corp. Channel 5, GMA Network Inc. and the independent production company, M-Zet, had expressed willingness to produce a show for the comedy king.

Eric Quizon

ABC 5, now owned by businessman Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco, has reportedly offered Dolphy a talent fee double what he gets from ABS-CBN.

The source said actor-director Eric Quizon had been mediating talks between his father and the three production companies. *Marinel R. Cruz*

ALL-STAR partnership: From left, Karim Bangcola, EVP, AMA; JV Rufino, editor in chief, INQ.7, Manny Pangilinan, PLDT chair, Sheila Coronel, executive director PCIJ, Felipe Gozon, presidnt/CEO GMA 7, Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, PDI president/CEO, Fr. Francis Lucas of CMN, Anneth Gozon-Abrogar of GMA New Media and Butch Gonzales, CEO, RGMA. ROMY HOMILLADA

Inquirer-GMA 7 election teamup gets ...

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with other groups for the joint coverage called "Eleksyon 2004," with Radio GMA/dzBB, GMA New Media Inc., INQ7, the Catholic Media Network, AMA Educational Systems, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism as the other partners.

"This is a gathering of the best in the industry," said GMA 7 president and CEO Felipe Gozon during the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement at the GMA 7 headquarters in Quezon City yesterday.

"It's an all-star cast," agreed INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez.

Except for the PCIJ, these companies have previously teamed up for a joint coverage of the 2001 national elections.

The INQUIRER and GMA 7 were also partners for the 1998 presidential elections and the 2001 senatorial elections media coverage.

Signatories

On hand to sign the MOA, apart from Gozon and Romualdez, were RGMA/dzBB president Mike Enriquez and CEO Romeo Gonzales; GMA New Media director Annette Gozon-Abrogar; INQ7 editor in chief JV Rufino; CMN president Fr. Francis Lucas; AMA executive vice president Karim Bangcola; PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan; and PCIJ executive director Sheila Coronel.

"In pursuit of excellence and in the interest of public service, the parties have expressed their mutual interest and intent to integrate and pool their collective efforts, resources and expertise by providing the public a comprehensive coverage of the elections," the MOA stated.

Gozon said their previous joint efforts produced "the most comprehensive and accurate of the 2001 elections."

"With such a track record and with long preparation and experience behind us, I am confident that our coverage of the 2004 elections will prove to be even better," he said, adding that they chose the INQUIRER because of its "unbiased, accurate, comprehensive and fearless" coverage.

Most credible institution

Romualdez described the May polls as "critical."

"There seems to be a sense of confusion, a feeling of helplessness, divisiveness. There's no direction. Coming from Edsa 1, 2, 3, the coming elections will give legitimacy to whoever is going to govern," she said after the simple signing ceremonies, adding that the next government should heal the nation.

Romualdez said the media have a great responsibility to be impartial and to be as fair as possible to all candidates "because right now, the media are the most credible institution in the country."

Gozon said that apart from informing the public, media groups also help ensure that the elections are peaceful, orderly and honest.

Saying the media should be "more than just the battleground for the elections," Coronel also stressed that they should provide enough information for the people to make wise choices.

Counting counts

Pangilinan agreed that the media have an important job ensuring that elections are credible. He said a politician told him it was not the voting that counts, but the counting.

On the other hand, Father Lucas said the Catholic Media Network is an "ideal" partner since its 58 radio stations reach even remote barangays like those in Tawi-Tawi.

New Media INQ would also provide election updates and information through text messages, according to Abrogar, while Rufino said INQ7 would serve as the Internet arm that would provide updates to overseas Filipino workers.

Fifteen thousand student volunteers from AMA would be fielded to voting precincts to conduct a quick count, said Bangcola. He said their quick count in 2001, aided by 5,000 volunteers, came closest to the official figures.

PLANE TO NAGA: Wasting no time, "RSR" commences the handshaking routine aboard a Philippine Airlines flight to his hometown. A close friend says he's typical E personality who thrives on attention. ERIK ARAZAS

NAGA CITY: With his mother Rosario and wife Sonia. During sorties in the South, Roco sings a Visayan love song which he says he learned while courting Sonia, who is from Bohol. ERIK ARAZAS

Talks a lot but he's no garden variety politician

MERIDA, LEYTE: Reaching for hands under the "gaze" of rival party candidates. "Campaigning is a humbling experience," Roco says. His campaign jingle, "We will Roco," is a takeoff of an old hit by a British rock group. ERIK ARAZAS

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your support).' Imagine saying this 3,000 times a day."

And imagine saying that with one or both hands extended to touch another—wet with blood from slaughtered animals, at the public market; thick with grease and dirt, in a factory; or muddied, out in a field.

This is not even half the picture. A single campaign sortie spells complicated transport arrangements, hurried hotel bookings, speeding motorcades, big crowds, little rest. In short, high energies, voices up by two octaves, frayed nerves. The candidate should smile through all of this, exude cool confidence while delivering speeches, and preserve his voice—this last one becoming a tall order with each passing hour.

Just kidding

No one in the group believed the killer schedule for Davao was serious. "It's a joke," one reporter was sure, and he didn't refer to the fact that the itinerary was studded with "Handshaking."

"I hope it works," was the best that Roco's running mate, Herminio "Hermie" Aquino, could offer by way of assurance. "It" promised something like 10 hours of sleep in two days.

Aquino is a jolly man. At 4 a.m., human traffic at the Manila Domestic Airport was rather heavy, but broadcaster Jay Sonza, a senatorial candidate and familiar face on television, breezed through the checkpoints and made his way to the departure lounge ahead of everyone else. Back at the door, security personnel asked the party's media staff while pointing to Aquino: *"Kasama 'nyo ba 'to* (is this one with you)?" The impertinence completely slipped past him.

Fair warning

Inday Santiago led the few dozen welcomers at Davao International Airport. "That's right," she was overheard as saying, "I'm giving you no rest for the next two days." Fair warning. The first of the day's series of motorcades was to start immediately, the media men were reminded. It was only 6:30 a.m.

Assigned to "RSR," as his staff calls Roco, was a shining black SUV with a sunroof. From this contraption he and Aquino would emerge when there were enough people on the sidewalks to wave at. Some of them returned the "I love you" sign—ring and middle fingers folded—that the party had adopted as hand greeting.

The majority just stared until they realized who the man was, and then it was too late to wave back. But in school areas, recognition was instant. Students, teachers, guards and ice cream vendors flashed the sign back at the man with the red floral shirt, exactly like the one he wore in the posters.

Photo-op

On the road to Agdao town two hours later, a paraplegic halted the group's second motorcade by having her wheelchair pushed in the way of RSR's van. Photographers and cameramen leaped from the media pickup right behind, for what could be the shot of the day. Roco talked to the young woman just long enough for the moment to be documented. And then he had to be on his way. The woman would not be left behind.

When the party alighted from their vehicles at the public market a few meters away, she was there waiting. It was a sight touching enough for reporters to want to know her name: Maridel Alcano, 21 years old. She made it to the 6 o'clock news.

What did she want from Roco? "What she wants from people in the market every day—money," said the locals who wondered why Alcano had generated so much fuss. "She gets angry if she's given loose change." Unfortunately for her, "handshaking" in the Alyansa's vocabulary did not include dispensing cash.

The market round was systematic, swift, and enough for even a detached observer to witness proof of every political candidate's determination. Some meat and fish vendors did not care to wipe their hands clean before taking the candidates' hands or hugging them, or holding their faces to plant wet kisses on their cheeks.

Not so depressed

From the market, the group proceeded to a nearby neighborhood that the schedule described as "depressed" and looked anything but, festooned as its little plaza was with streamers and posters, mostly of senatorial candidate Frank Chavez.

"You could say Chavez is the hardest-working in the campaign among the seven senatorial bets," said a political staff. "Either that, or he has the widest support network. Almost always, everywhere we go, he gets there ahead. It's like having an advance party."

The residents had turned out for the mini-rally, coaxed in part by a brass band playing RSR's campaign jingle, "We Will Roco"—actually "We Will Rock You," an old hit by the British rock group Queen. This, while Chavez's own jingle blared on a screechy sound system. Children were interested only in collecting campaign paraphernalia, especially stickers that they could paste onto tricycles. Sure, some adults acted like children but the majority listened intently to the speakers on the makeshift stage.

Rosita Magdadaro, 32-year-old housewife and mother of three, said this was because they had "not yet decided" who to vote for. "They're (Alyansa) the first group to come here."

All seven senatorial candidates were present, the easier to introduce them using the catchphrase, "JC, JC GaBaY": Jay (Sonza), (Frank) Chavez, (Edno) Joson, (Bong) Coo, Gat (Gatmaytan), Ba(tas) Mauricio and (Jun) Yasay.

Blind can see

Speaking in the dialect, Davaoeños Sonza and Yasay were warmly received. Gatmaytan, the blind lawyer, made everyone hush up when he said the blind were better off than those who could see, but chose not to. And then he made them laugh when he concluded by saying that, in the very least, he was *"buta"* (sightless), but not *"buang"* (witless).

Batas Mauricio promised the availability of legal advice to any Filipino who needed it; and Bong Coo, a regional sports training center for Davao.

Joson talked less about himself than the JCJC GaBaY slate and the man that he believed should be the next president. Chavez was applauded for his claim of recovering so much money from the Marcoses, and then entertained his listeners with a song by Elvis Presley, "Can't Help Falling In Love With You."

Clueless

Well aware that there were more people in the country like the security man at the Manila Domestic Airport who had no clue who he was, Aquino introduced himself as "Ninoy's uncle" and "Kris' grandfather." Then, like Joson, he discussed why Filipinos should vote for Roco.

RSR was the last to address the small crowd. He is a seasoned and charismatic speaker. In person, he sounded even better than his first television commercial, which was the best in its class in the initial campaign round.

A few meters away, Inday Santiago was scolding a TV reporter who started interviewing people, cameraman in tow. "Can you please do this elsewhere?" she said. "Senator Roco is speaking; you are being very rude."

'Media before security'

Roco wound up his turn with a Boholano love song, which his listeners apparently enjoyed as much as Chavez's Elvis number.

It was past 10 a.m. The brass band—whose members wore floral vests, by the way—played "We Will Roco" for the last time, and the candidates were off to the local radio station Eagle Broadcasting, for a two-hour live interview on dxED. En route, a van slipped between RSR's SUV and the media vehicle. Roco's media staff Elvira "Bright" Liwanag was annoyed. She dialed a number on her mobile phone and said, almost in a whisper but sternly: "Media before security." It could have been the 11th commandment; the unwanted van disappeared.

Forever and a day

"Once I hold a dirty hand in mine, that person is bound to me forever and a day," RSR is saying during that ride to Bansalan. "It's like sealing a pact; they never forget."

He likes to tell stories as much as taking potshots at one, and only one, of his four rivals: Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He reads aloud posters on a steel fence: "Gloria-Noli-Gloria. That would mean, 'Not Gloria,' wouldn't it?" he says, chuckling.

Normally, he would be catnapping, which he is said to do very well. "Even for just 10 minutes—and deep sleep *talaga*," according to Shelah Mae Famador, a political staff. But he doesn't look like he needs that at the moment.

"He is a typical E personality," says Inday Santiago. "He thrives on attention."

Or he must be happy about the sortie so far. The whole Davao region has a voting population of 3,865,013 (2001 figures), and he feels he has made a fairly good connection.

Close to No. 2

"Ping (Lacson) was No. 1 here (in surveys)," he recalls. "And then FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.) came and he became No. 1. Now, seeing the response of the people to Alyansa, I can't help thinking that, in the very least, I am a close second."

He's also happy about his candidates. "They're doing so well," he exclaims. "Not all of them were comfortable about speaking in public at first. *Lalo na 'yang si Bong Coo, parang humuhugot ng bayawak* (Bong Coo always seemed like she was pulling a big lizard out of its hole)."

Roco does this a lot—talk like he's reading from old *panitikan*. *"Ang sabi ng ama kong magsasaka,"* he likes to say during rallies, *"huwag kong kalilimutan ang palay, na yumuyuko kapag siksik na—'yan ang pagpapakumbaba* (my farmer-father told me to never forget the rice stalk, which bends when it's heavy with grain—that's humility)."

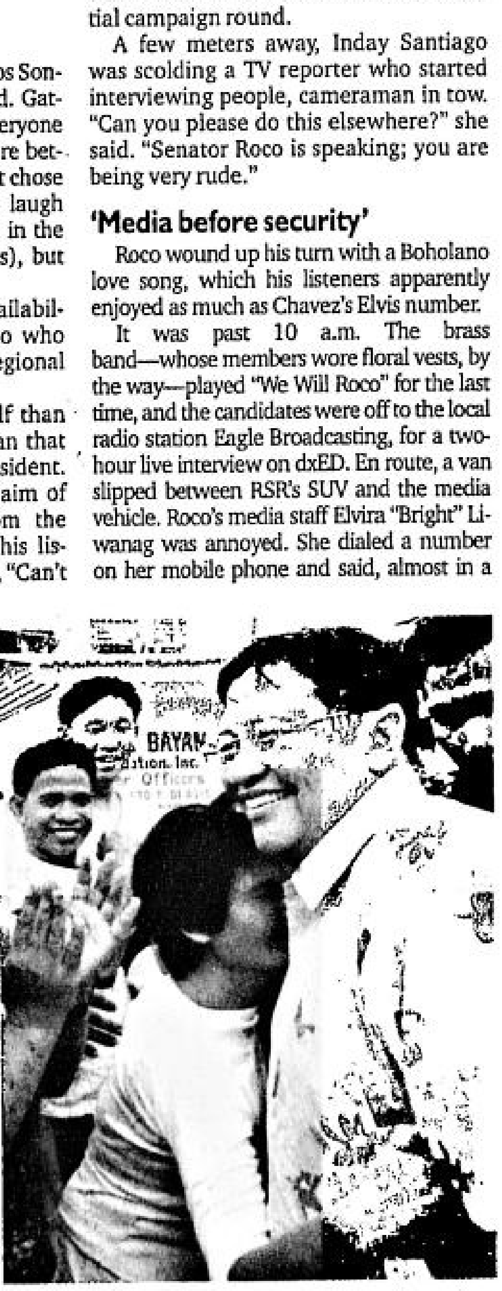
Stopping for chow

Now RSR clutches a jacket to his throat. "I am protecting myself because I sweated earlier," he explains. More precisely, he is protecting his voice; he knows it's one of his assets. "On radio, especially, a weak voice is bad (for a candidate)."

The vehicle slows down at an intersection. *"Uy, isao!"* RSR says, spotting a favorite street food (barbecued chicken innards). Inday Santiago rolls up her eyes.

"When we were campaigning in 1998, we had to stop if he saw something that he really liked to eat," she recalls. "I bet he'd do that now if I let him."

ALYANSA'S SLATE: "They're doing very well," says the standard-bearer, here shown with senatorial candidates Jay Sonza, Perfecto Yasay Jr., Frank Chavez, Batas Mauricio and running mate Hermie Aquino. The party's hand signal means "I love you." ERIK ARAZAS



WITH URBAN POOR: Supporters are allowed to get emotional; the candidates should never stop smiling. AP

A prosecutor who doesn't know the law

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IT SEEMS President Macapagal-Arroyo made a mistake in appointing Julieta Amatong as replacement for resigned secretary of finance Jose Isidro Camacho.

Amatong and Camacho are poles apart. Amatong can't hold a candle to the brilliant and honest Camacho.

She is hounded by controversies. First, there is this accusation that she had personal ties to the prime suspects in a multibillion-peso tax scam.

The charge was made by Alberto Salanga, former executive director of the One Stop Shop Credit and Duty Drawback Center, a unit under the finance department.

And then comes another complaint from her own people who said that she stopped the investigation of Michael Chua Guy, a foreign exchange tycoon. Guy's tax refunds from 1998 to 2003 were being scrutinized by the men from the finance department's Revenue Protection Service (RIPS) when Amatong allegedly ordered them to stop.

Amatong allegedly issued the cease order to the RIPS people after Guy went to her house and talked to her.

So, Madame Secretary, you have turned your house into an extension of your office.

Amatong must be that close to Guy, a well-known member of the Binondo Central Bank, she didn't wait for last Monday to issue the cease order. The order to RIPS came on Saturday evening, a weekend.

* * *

Tarlac Provincial Prosecutor Aladdin Bermudez thinks that since murder and rape with homicide are punishable by death, both can be interchanged. In short, he can't tell one from the other.

"Bakit kailangan pang i-amend ang kaso, eh, pareho namang bitay ang parusa diyan (Why should I amend the case when both are punishable by death)?" Bermudez replied when asked why he filed a murder charge against a suspect accused of raping and killing a four-year-old girl.

My staff at "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" asked the question. The victim's parents came to "Isumbong" to complain that Bermudez would not amend the complaint despite being shown results of a medico-legal that the girl was raped.

The good prosecutor stands his ground. He doesn't want to amend the case from murder to rape with homicide.

I asked several lawyers about his intransigence. They all laughed at him.

Of course, these lawyer-friends said, there's a big difference between murder and rape with homicide even if the penalty for both is death.

If the case is not amended, the court might acquit the accused on a technicality since the charge is not specific.

Saan bang law school *nag-aral itong si* Bermudez? I'm surprised he passed the Bar exams.

DENR REPORT

Air over QC dirtiest

By Volt Contreras

THE AIR over Quezon City have been recorded as having the worst levels of pollution since the mid-1990s, a report of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said.

The city's busy streets have been spewing the highest levels of total suspended particulates or TSP's from 1996 to 2002, except in 1998 when the record went to Valenzuela, according to the DENR's 2002 National Air Quality Status Report.

TSPs refer to dust, smoke, soot, mist, acid fumes, and other airborne metallic or mineral particles small enough to be inhaled. They are mainly produced by motor vehicles and fuel-burning establishments.

From 1996 to 2002, four stations located along major Quezon City thoroughfares posted the year's highest TSP readings in the entire metropolis.

From 2000 to 2002, the TSP levels at the area covered by Congressional Avenue station reached 359; 227, and 211 micrograms per normal cubic meter, respectively.

In 1999, the Araneta station's readings set the metro-wide record at 344 micrograms/ncm. In 1998, the Valenzuela station grabbed the dubious record with 266.

The highest level in 1997 was measured at 313 micrograms/ncm by the station located at the public works department regional office on Edsa, again in QC. In 1996, the sampling station on Quezon Avenue obtained the maximum reading at 282.

When the monitoring started, the dirtiest air was in Ermita from '75 to '76, and then in Quiapo in '78.

Shabu lab raided

THE POLICE raided yesterday morning an abandoned warehouse in Caloocan City where they found equipment and raw materials for the manufacture of shabu.

The equipment found inside the warehouse on Gen. Tinio Street, Morning Breeze Subdivision, could easily manufacture at least 125 kilos of shabu a week based on the type of freezer and equipment found inside the establishment, an official said. *Tina Santos*

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ALMA MORENO DECLARATION

Baclaran belongs to vendors

By Margaux Ortiz

EXPECT the streets and sidewalks of Baclaran to be again occupied by vendors should TV personality Alma Moreno win the mayoralty race in Parañaque City.

Moreno, estranged wife of outgoing mayor Joey Marquez, vowed to return the vendors to Baclaran during her proclamation rally in front of the Redemptorist Church Thursday night.

"I am furious at those who kicked you out," Moreno told a cheering audience, mostly Baclaran vendors.

"*Hindi makatao yun* (That's inhuman)," she added, referring to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's campaign to clear Baclaran's roads and sidewalks of illegal vendors.

Moreno declared that she was ready to throw rocks at whoever would evict the hawkers.

Jun Banaga, who is running for representative of Parañaque's 1st district, echoed Moreno's sentiment.

He said in an impassioned voice, "*Ibabalik namin ang* Baclaran *sa mga* vendor (We will give Baclaran back to the vendors)."

The MMDA earlier cleared Baclaran of illegal vendors because they caused heavy traffic in the area.

Moreno, who called herself "Mother of Parañaque," said she was qualified to serve the city owing to her 12-year experience as Marquez's first lady.

"I have suffered much," she said, referring to her son Vandolph's accident, her mother's recent death, and her much-publicized breakup with Marquez. "But I believe I have a more important mission: to serve my beloved people of Parañaque."

MORENO

Three-day strike looms over fares

By Clarissa Batino and Tina Santos

TRANSPORT groups led by the Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) are preparing for a three-day transport holiday to press for an increase in fares and a rollback in fuel prices.

Piston president Mar Garvida said they were expecting multisectoral groups of workers, farmers, government employees and urban poor plan to participate in the strike to be led by his group's more than 200,000 members nationwide.

Provincial members of Piston, particularly those in Laguna, Bulacan, Quezon, Cebu City and Davao City will kick off the 3-day jeepney holiday on Monday.

All of Piston's members will follow up with a nationwide strike on Tuesday, with some provincial groups continuing with the strike until Wednesday.

80,000 in Metro

Garvida said Piston's 80,000 members in Metro Manila could only afford to go on a strike for one day.

Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Chair Maria Elena Bautista quickly threatened to suspend or even revoke the franchise of jeepney drivers and operators who would join the transport holiday.

"Those who will participate in the strike would have to face the full force of the law," said Bautista.

The LTFRB earlier suspended the franchises of 5 Piston members nabbed during the March 1 nationwide strike.

Garvida chided the LTFRB for trying to scare jeepney drivers and operators, saying launching mass actions were a basic right of jeepney groups.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers (Fejodap) with more than 250,000 members nationwide said it won't be joining Piston in the strike.

Fejodap president Zenaida Maranan said they would wait for the LTFRB decision on the fare hike petition of P1.50 in spite of the assurance given by Transporation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza that he would not allow any fare hike.

METROBRIEFS

Ready for jail over 'Kinse'

SENATORIAL candidate Alfredo Lim said he was willing to go to jail for "defending the honor, virtue and dignity of women," referring to his objection to the "Kinse Años" advertisements of Destileria Limtuaco's Napoleon Brandy. The liquor maker has filed malicious mischief charges against Lim after he cut out the word "Kinse" from the Napoleon billboard on Roxas Boulevard. Speaking before a rally in Mandaluyong City, Lim likened the ad to a "rabid dog" that must be put down with or without the permission of its owner. *Luige del Puerto*

Old-timers in Manila polls

TWO political old-timers in Manila have joined forces to challenge incumbent Mayor Lito Atienza who is seeking a new term. Former Manila Mayor Gemiliano Lopez Jr. and incumbent Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna have sealed their bids as running mates. "It's because of KNP (Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino). We have to be together," Lacuna said yesterday. KNP standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. has declared them as official KNP candidates in Manila. *Tarra Quismundo*

'Bibot' banks to FPJ magic

MANDALUYONG congressional candidate Ernesto "Bibot" Domingo Jr. hopes that the raising of his hands by Fernando Poe Jr. would translate to votes to beat outgoing Mayor Benjamin Abalos. Jr., who is running for Congress. "This is a blessing," Domingo said during Poe's first proclamation rally in Metro Manila since the local campaign period kicked off. Domingo said 70 percent of Mandaluyong residents, who were poor, idolized Poe. *Luige del Puerto*

Tinga seeks peace pact

TAGUIG Mayor Freddie Tinga yesterday said he would be inviting other mayoralty candidates and their party mates to sign a peace covenant next month. He said the covenant would ensure peaceful elections in the municipality, where four hot spots were identified by the police. *Margaux Ortiz*

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BASKETBALL: NBA-Cavs vs Sixers; 8 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports; Timberwolves vs Lakers; 11:30 a.m.; ESPN (r-9:30 p.m.) and Star Sports (r-5 p.m.)—Cleveland's King James pays a visit to the Answer's home turf in Philadelphia while KG and his Minnesota teammates take on Shaq and Kobe in LA.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ FedEx, Maddox eye P'foods as victim /A24

■ Elorde honored by ex-world champ Gomes /A25

■ Aussie up; Woods falls /A26

Superbody shoos away 2 BAP reps

By June Navarro

TRINIDAD

THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines yesterday sent two emissaries who were immediately shooed away even before the gathering of the country's basketball major stakeholders could start.

PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad said BAP consultants Danny Lopez and Willy Mateo were barred from joining the convention of the "superbody" because they are not the duly recognized representatives of the national sports association.

Trinidad said the superbody, made up of basketball stakeholders including the PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and other collegiate leagues, had requested the BAP top brass to attend the gathering.

"We acknowledge that the BAP has sent somebody to represent the group. But these people are not duly authorized to speak in behalf of the BAP," Trinidad told the INQUIRER.

"They (Lopez and Mateo) didn't even know their functions and designations in the BAP," he added.

Trinidad said the members of the superbody were flabbergasted when Lopez told them that the BAP had sent them just to observe.

"We didn't come here just to observe," Trinidad pointed out. "We came here to decide on how to improve Philippine basketball and to effect change."

The superbody was expecting either BAP president Tiny Literal or secretary general Graham Lim.

"They missed the opportunity to finally effect change in Philippine basketball," said Trinidad of the absent BAP officials.

Despite the snub, Trinidad said the superbody would keep the door open for the BAP.

"We're willing to go all the way. In fact, we will craft an alternative basketball program and present it to the Fiba (international basketball federation), Philippine Olympic Committee and even to the BAP," said Trinidad.

"If all our efforts prove futile, we probably deserve what we're getting right now," added Trinidad, referring to the recent dismal showing of the national team in international tournaments.

Aside from Trinidad, also present during the meeting were PBA chair Buddy Encarnado, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, PBL deputy commissioner Tom Ong, Butch Maniego (PBL), Tisha Abundo (NCRAA and UCAA), Ramon Cercado (NCAA), Junjun Capistrano (UAAP) and Moying Martelino.

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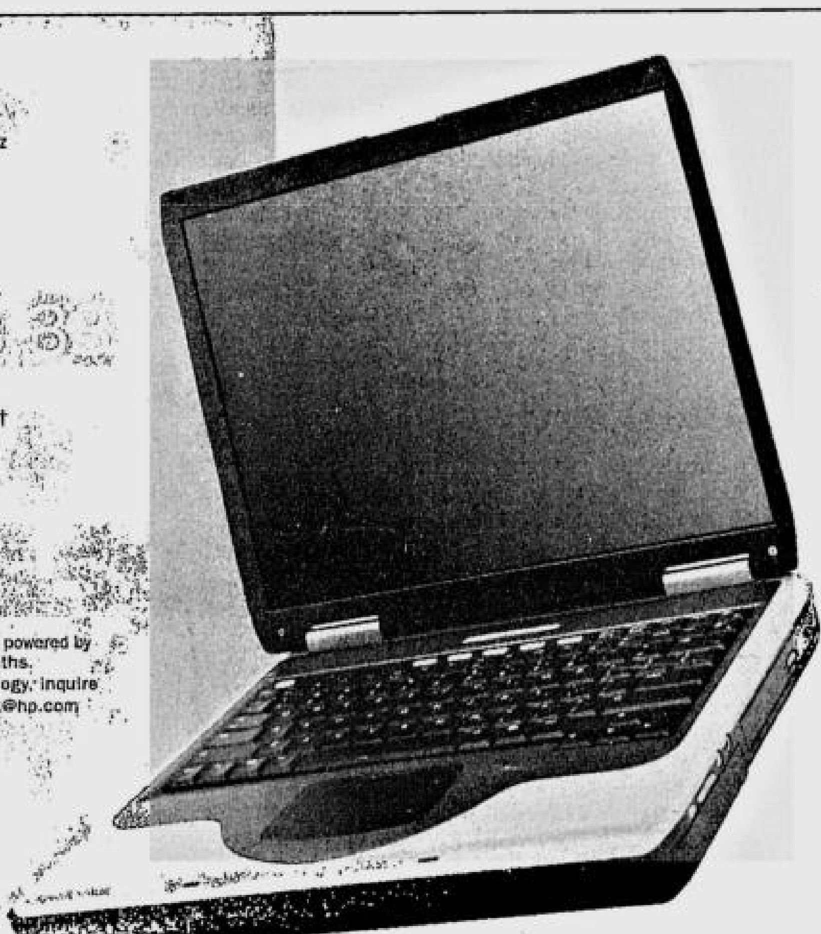

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FedEx, Maddox eye Purefoods as 2nd victim

A WEEK after ending its losing spell, FedEx shoots for a second straight victory when it takes on Purefoods today in the Gran Matador PBA Reinforced Conference at the Makati Coliseum.

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel Beer	6	0
Alaska	5	2
Talk N Text	4	2
Red Bull	4	2
Coca-Cola	3	3
Ginebra	3	4
Purefoods	2	4
Shell	2	4
FedEx	1	4
Sta. Lucia	1	5

GAMES TODAY
(Makati Coliseum)
4:10 p.m.
Purefoods vs FedEx
6:30 p.m.
Coca-Cola vs Talk N Text

The Express unveiled a gem of an import in Mike Maddox to score their first win in five games at the expense of the Shell Turbochargers and coach Boni Garcia expects him to deliver again against the TJ Hotdogs at 4:10 p.m.

Coca-Cola tries to catch up with the leaders when it tangles with Talk 'N Text in the main game at 7 p.m.

Mark Sanford is expected to be in the forefront of the 'Tigers' attack against the Phone Pals, now reinforced by their former import Jerald Honeycutt.

Maddox, who came after a losing stint with the Kansas City Knights against the Dennis Rodman-led Long Beach Jam in the recently concluded ABA Finals, fired 38 points despite playing overweight at 228 pounds.

"He's slowly getting into the groove. By the time we play Purefoods, he'll almost be 100 percent," said Garcia after the win that eventually led to the sacking of Shell's American coach John Moran.

Eddie Elisma, the TJ Hotdogs' reinforcement, had played with the 6-foot-8 Maddox for three US NCAA seasons (1994-97) at Georgia Tech.

"I know his (Elisma) brand of play but he knows mine too. It's just a matter of which team plays best," said the 30-year-old Maddox.

Coach Ryan Gregorio will have to summon more fire and desire from veterans Kerby Raymundo, Jun Limpot, Noy Castillo, Rey Evangelista and Alvin Patrimonio for the Hotdogs to improve their 2-4 record.

Rookies James Yap, Ervin Sotto and Paul Artadi should also come up with decent performances for Purefoods.

Honeycutt, who saw action for the Phone Pals several times, dislodged Randy Holcomb, who was unimpressive in TNT's losses to Alaska and San Miguel Beer.

TNT is tied for third (4-2) with idle Red Bull, which escaped with a close victory over Alaska Wednesday in Cebu City.

The Tigers have lost two in a row, the most recent a 100-98 decision from the Turbochargers. *June Navarro*

ALLAN DEFENSOR/CEBU DAILY NEWS

ALASKA'S Ali Peek eludes the Red Bull defense underneath to score during the two teams' game at the Cebu Coliseum Thursday. The Barakos prevailed, 95-93.

PSC issues urgent call to 34 NSAs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LET'S all buckle down to work.

This was the urgent call made by Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain yesterday to the 34 national sports associations that will try to clinch a first-ever overall championship for the country in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Buhain said he would meet with the NSA representatives after the Holy Week to ask for their training programs as well as their requirements to ensure maximum medal performance in the biennial games set for Nov. 20-30.

The NSAs that will submit their programs early will be given priority by the PSC, which is tasked to oversee the training of SEAG-bound athletes.

"We want to start as early as possible so we can plan ahead with the limited budget that we have," said Buhain, adding that the success in 2005 depends on the "strength of the partnership between the PSC and the NSAs."

The PSC has started to fulfill its financial obligations to the NSAs by releasing P11 million to at least 10 NSAs. "More NSAs will get the reimbursements of their expenses," said Buhain.

Buhain also supported the consultative assembly put up by concerned NSAs two weeks ago. The assembly aims to foster cooperation among the NSAs with regard to their participation in the SEAG.

"We will support the assembly which is a timely call considering that the country wants nothing but the overall championship," Buhain added.

Buhain, who appeared as guest at the SCOOP sa Kamayan Padre Faura, also announced that he would revive the "Create a Sports Hero" project to make sure the country's first gold medalist in the Athens Olympic gets not only monetary reward but also a means of livelihood as well.

He said the project is supported by Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina as well as corporate partners WG&A and Air Philippines.

PBL Unity Cup under way today

A FORMER University of the Philippines player, whose dream of playing in the big leagues was cut short because of lymphatic cancer, will share the limelight with newcomers Toyota Otis-Letran and Lee Pipes-Ateneo during the opening today of the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

For showing great resolve in his battle against the dreaded disease, the 21-year-old Jon-Jon Tabique has been invited to be the guest of honor at the kickoff rites of the second Unity Cup at the Makati Coliseum which will be shown live over Studio 23.

Tabique, who once played in the junior tournament of the league a couple of years back, will deliver an inspirational talk before the opening game between newcomer Toyota Otis-Letran and Viva Mineral Water-FEU.

"It's a great honor to be the guest of honor in the opening of the PBL. I'm so happy about it because I did not expect that I will be invited," said Tabique.

Commissioner Chino Trinidad expressed confidence that Tabique can inspire other cancer-striken people to be strong and resilient in their battle against the Big C.

"We are inviting him to tell everybody in the league, especially the current crop of players how blessed they are. They are healthy and being given this kind of opportunity to play in the league while Jon-Jon is still dreaming about it, " said Trinidad. "You have to salute the courage of Jon-Jon."

Lee Pipes-Ateneo, the other newcomer in the eight-team field, takes on Sunkist-UST in the other game scheduled for the day which is expected to draw a huge crowd since most of their players are the current stars of UAAP.

Larry Fonacier and wily guard LA Tenorio will spearhad Lee Pipes-Ateneo's campaign along with vastly improving JC Intal, Paolo Bugia and Magnum Membrere. The team will be beefed up by veteran Nino Gelig and former pro Marlon Basco.

Before the opening rites, ABS-CBN's ASAP Mania will hold a mini-concert that will feature the network's popular stars, including the striking Rica Peralejo at 12 noon.

Also invited to perform are Show Girls, led by Michelle Bayle, Cherry Lou and Michelle Esteves, and the popular band River Maya. Fans are advised to go to the venue to have a better view of the bonus show.

Admission is free with the gates opening at 10 a.m.

Asian F3 revs up for new season

THE ASIAN Formula 3 Corporation has revved up its engine for another fast-paced season this year with the launch of the 2004 AF3 series on Wednesday at the Power Plant mall in Rockwell, Makati City.

The AF3 series, which aims to bring motor sports to a new level in the Asian region, features a six-leg, 12-race calendar with races taking place in China and the Philippines.

The AF3 board is made of 11 different Asian-based racing teams, including Formula Shell Racing, Tom's Philippines, Team Goddard, kart 1 Racing, JF3 Racing, SpeedTech Asia and Ghiasports Racing.

Eala easing Jimwell's pain

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I RAISE a glass to PBA Commissioner Noli Eala for allowing Jimwell Torion to rejoin Red Bull Barako starting on April 18, one day before FPJ's best friend and my soulmate (Erap, who else?) celebrates his birthday. Noli E's decision to cut by five months Jimwell's suspension is in keeping with the "season of healing and forgiving." In barely two weeks, the Holy Week is on (April 4-11).

To refresh your memory, Jimwell was suspended on Nov. 19 for deliberately hitting Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text with a clothesline tackle during the Red Bull-TNT game that evening, thereby breaking Jimmy's nose.

Jimwell was lucky to have escaped from his indiscretion unscathed, thanks to Jimmy Alapag's big, forgiving heart. Although his relatives had egged him on to file grave physical injury charges against Jimwell, Jimmy turned a deaf ear and brushed aside a court case.

Here's a glass, too, to Jimmy Alapag. May his tribe increase.

But Noli Eala came to Jimmy's defense. He slapped Jimwell a 10-month ban from the league ending Sept. 19.

Actually, what Noli E did in effect when he punished Jimwell was tantamount to issuing a chilling statement condemning violence of any kind in the PBA. To back his iron-fisted policy against roughhousing tactics, Noli E fined Jimwell P70,000.

It sure hurts where it hurts most—the pocket—as Jimwell would suffer more financially since his absence from the Red Bull bench starting November had cost him P1.1 million in basic salary.

Sometimes, one has to learn things the hard way to realize the importance of something we normally take for granted—like our jobs.

As if to aggravate matters for this Argao, Cebu native, Jimwell's uncalled for and unprovoked violence came just weeks after he had finished undergoing rehabilitation for drug abuse. Jimwell's act of hitting Alapag somewhat negated his program to rebuild his character, if not his lost esteem, as a result of his brush with illegal drugs not too long ago.

But, seemingly, all is not lost for this player aptly nicknamed by Dennis U. Eroa "The Typhoon" during Jimwell Torion's brilliant stint in the PBL. He should be on the way now to a full recovery, if not resurrection, from the depths of misery and pain.

"In reconsidering our decision," said Noli Eala, "compassion and reason were primordial in our minds as we took into consideration the interest of the league by putting closure to some problems of the past, the interest of the fans who cannot be denied the excitement which Torion brings into games."

Noli E said he had done his job sending across a message not only to Torion but also to all the players in the PBA that "the league will not tolerate improper conduct on and off the court."

Said Noli E: "Clearly, we've seen that Jimwell has been very remorseful and, hopefully, he has learned his lesson from the suspension."

Jimwell Torion was quoted as saying: "I want to thank the commissioner for considering my appeal. I've learned my lesson and it won't happen again." Jimwell also used the occasion to apologize once more to Jimmy Alapag.

"As for Jimmy, I am very sorry for what I have done," said the 5-foot-8 Jimwell.

In cutting short by five months the suspension of Jimwell, Noli E took into account the "interest of Jimwell's family, especially his children, who cannot be made to suffer from his mistakes or indiscretions."

Very touching. But if Jimwell misbehaves again, that means he cares not for his children and, in that case, a recidivist needs no mercy. Another indiscretion and Jimwell deserves a life fit for the doghouse.

His children?

Oh, they will survive and once they are old enough to know the ways of the world, they will realize that nobody, indeed, can choose his own parents.

***

FASTBREAK. The Power Bowl at Rockwell Makati is always packed to the rafters these days, thanks mainly to the expert management of Bonnie Solis, the country's representative to world and Asian bowling tournaments in 1979 and 1980. A national coach of bowling since 1994, Bonnie had to leave his coaching chores last year to concentrate on managing Power Bowl, a state-of-the-art mecca for bowling lovers.

FORE! **Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Peewee Trinidad hits the ceremonial drive opening the first Mayor's Cup Golf Classic at the Villamor Golf Club course. The tournament, principally supported by Petron, San Miguel Corp., Pagcor and Columbia Airfreight Complex, aims to raise funds for the city's indigents and poverty alleviation projects.**

ROMY HOMILLADA

SVI-Petron Grand Prix flagoff slated Sunday

THE SVI-Petron Grand Prix, popularly known as the mother of all motorsports in the country, begins its 11th year with the staging of the first two rounds at the Subic International Raceway this Sunday.

An annual undertaking of the Sports Values Inc. and Petron Corp., the event will showcase the country's leading competition drivers in a 'no-holds-barred, 14-part series spread over six months.

Defending champion Jody Coseteng of Caltex-Red Horse-San Miguel Beer and perennial contenders Kookie Ramirez of Petron-SRA and Mike Anton of Red Bull head the elite list of drivers seeing action in the super saloon category.

Coseteng has won five of the first 10 years of circuit racing in the country, including the last three.

RP jungolf tour kicks off Monday at Canlubang

AGOJO

RAMOS

HAVING completed their school requirements for the year, the country's young guns brace for an exciting and long summer with the start of the Philippine Junior Golf Tour Monday at the Canlubang north and Riviera executive courses.

The heroes of a fruitful international campaign last year—Jayvie Agojo, Dottie Ardina, AR Ramos, Andie Unson and Miguel Tabuena—will all be back to campaign in their respective age groups in the circuit that will be played mostly in Luzon.

Luigi Tabuena, the new president of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines, said companies like Samsung, DHL Philippines and Philippine Airlines as well as sports patrons led by Ricky Razon of ICTSI have promised full support for the new tour that will finally introduce the national ranking system.

This time, jungolfers will earn points not just for their final placings but also for their daily scores. An even-par round, for instance, gets 100 points and an extra 10 will be given to every stroke off par.

"We are introducing a ranking system which will push players to become consistent with their scores," said Tabuena. "The rankings will then be used in the future to pick players for international competitions."

Competitions in Class A for players 15-17 years, Class B (13-14), Class C (11-12) and Class D (9-10) will be held at the Canlubang while the Class E tourney for kids 8 years and under will be played at its regular venue, the Riviera executive course.

M'luyong solo Asian chess leader

Standings after 7 rounds:
19.5—Mandaluyong; **19.0**—Guangzhou (CHI); **18.0**—Pasay; **17.0**—Pavlodar (KAZ), Tagaytay; **16.0**—Samarinda (INA); **15.5**—Jakarta (INA); **15.0**—Tehran (IRA); **14.5**—Sydney (AUS); **14.0**—Tanauan; **13.5**—Kanchipuram (IND), Kuala Lumpur (MAS); **12.5**—Sanaa (YEM), Doha (QAT); **8.0**—Bandar Seri Begawan (BRU), Macau; **7.5**—Hong Kong

TAGAYTAY—Mandaluyong blanked Tanauan, 4-0, Friday and swept into the solo lead after seven rounds of the 14th Asian Cities Chess Championship at the Tagaytay International Convention Center here.

It was the second straight shutout triumph for the Mandaluyong woodpushers, who also swept Sanaa of Yemen in the sixth round, to move on top with 19.5 points with two rounds left in the event.

Erstwhile leader Guangzhou of China drubbed Jakarta, 3-1, but fell to second place with 19 points in the event organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and the Tagaytay City government.

Pasay City, starring the 1-2 punch of International Master Barlo Nadera and Oliver Dimakiling, sustained its giant-killing ways in round 6 by toppling defending champion Pavlodar of Kazakhstan, 2.5-1.5, but found Tehran of Iran a hard nut to crack in the next round and settled for a 2.5-1.5 win.

Pasay remained in the hunt for the Dubai Cup as they stood third with 18 points.

Mandaluyong and Pasay were set to collide in the eighth round scheduled late Friday in a match that could very well decide the champion of the chessfest featuring 19 cities from 15 countries.

Pavlodar fashioned a well-earned 2.5-1.5 win over host Tagaytay, which had entered the round in a tie for second to fourth places with Mandaluyong and Pasay City with similar 15.5 points each.

The defending champions were to meet with the Chinese in the penultimate round.

Mandaluyong, seeded No. 5, made the most of the opportunity against ninth-seeded Tanauan to gain the inside track to the title.

IM Mark Paragua, the country's triple gold medalist in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, started the rout by outplaying Fide Master Fernie Donguines with white in 35 moves of a King's Indian game.

Fellow IM Idelfonso Datu then used the Alekhine Defense to outwit Rolando Nolte in 57 moves on board 2. IM Richard Bitoon and Rolly Martinez also handily won over Tanauan's Teodulfo Nones and Gabriel Layesa on boards 3 and 4, respectively.

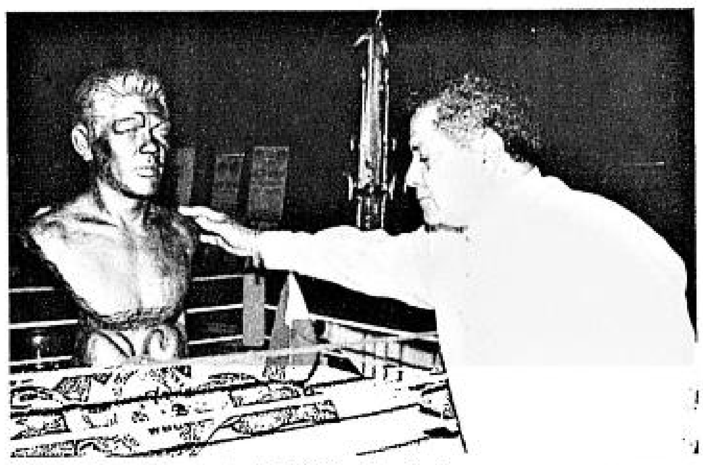
GM Eugene Torre, who led Tagaytay to a 3-1 lacing of Tehran in the sixth round, was the lone casualty in the hosts' loss to Pavlodar.

Although enjoying an edge with white in the early going against Pavel Kotsur on board 1, Asia's first GM made a dubious pawn move that enabled the Kazakh to mount a counterattack. Torre eventually gave up in 31 moves of a Trompovsky Opening.

JOHNNY ELORDE MANAGEMENT INTER
IONAL

GOMES (fourth from left) acknowledges cheers after receiving the "Flash" Elorde Memorial Trophy. From left, Johnny Elorde, Mrs. Laura Elorde, Gomes' wife, Arlene, Gomes' grandson, Scott James, Gabriel "Bebot" Elorde Jr. and guest of honor chair Ben Abalos of the Commission on Elections.

Elorde honored by world champ he dethroned



GOMES pays homage to the Filipino boxing icon. BETOY JOHNSON

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD Harold Gomes, the man Flash Elorde knocked out in the March 1960 inauguration of the Araneta Coliseum, walked up to the golden bust of his late tormentor, bowed then lovingly touched the image.

His eyes closed, Gomes mumbled a short prayer. He then faced the crowd which rose to thank and applaud him for attending the occasion.

Gomes and the absent people's featherweight champion, Manny Pacquiao, were the main recipients of the Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Awards at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City Wednesday night.

During the Elorde Banquet of Champions, Gomes, who now works as a fight judge for the World Boxing Organization (WBO), recalled how he and the Filipino boxing hero fought toe to toe until he could no longer take the punches.

Gomes, then the world junior lightweight champion, would hit the deck seven times. He was counted out in the 7th round.

On Wednesday, Gomes received the Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Memorial Trophy and joined 12 other world and international champions who held sway in their respective divisions in what is considered a breakout year for Philippine boxing.

On the eve of the Awards Night, Gomes returned to the venue where he gained a lifelong friend in Elorde.

He recalled the fight night, which lured more than 30,000 people to the Big Dome, like it was yesterday.

"It was so hot, I wondered if they turned off the air-conditioning," he said. There was yet no air-conditioning at the Big Dome then.

Pacquiao retained his IBF superbantam tiara in two successful title defenses in 2003 before shocking the boxing world with a sensational 11th-round stoppage of pound-for-pound great Marco Antonio Barrera last November.

Boxing stars received the Flash Elorde Awards, presented by the clan of Da Flash, an International Hall of Famer, during formal rites sponsored by Pagcor, PCSO, Family Rubbing Alcohol, Casa Belrina Travel Consultants, Johnson & Johnson, Reli Tours & Travel, Elorde Sporting Goods International and Elorde Sports Center, said a statement from affair organizers. *With a report from Salven L. Lagumbay*

Eagles unscathed in SEA baseball with 2 hard wins

By Trina Ibarle

THE MANILA Smart Eagles clinched the first finals berth in the under-19 seniors boys division yesterday, pulling off two scrambling victories to remain unscathed in the Southeast Asian Youth Baseball/Softball tournament at the Alabang Country Club grounds.

The Filipinos came back from a 0-5 deficit in the first inning to roll back Bangkok, 7-5, then needed an extra inning to down Perth, 5-3, and complete a four-game sweep of the elimination round.

Bangkok and Singapore, beaten 7-4 by the Philippines Wednesday, clash today for the right to challenge the host team for the title.

The Manila ATC Mariners dropped a 6-5 decision to Bangkok and wound up with a 3-1 record at the close of the eliminations in the under-12 division.

But the Manila Bellevue Sharks avenged that loss somehow with a 14-5 rout of another Bangkok squad in the under-14 category. It was the Sharks' first win in three games.

The Eagles found themselves behind by five runs at the start as Srisapet Jirapod, who had two RBIs, led a five-hit Bangkok attack.

But Ian Macapinlac and reliever Justin Zialcita combined to silence the Thais' bats from there while Miggy Corcuera blasted a solo home run in the third inning then hit a two-run homer in the sixth to spark the big RP comeback.

Returning to the diamond hours later, the Philippines again trailed, this time by 0-3, as the Australian nationals scored in the first two innings off Mynard Ocampo. The Eagles tied it in the fourth with a three-run explosion courtesy of Aldo Pamplona and Nikko Dizon but the deadlock stayed after seven innings.

Pamplona emerged hero for the Eagles as he broke the 3-3 tie with a double that sent home Justin Zialcita in the first extra inning, then scored minutes later on a sacrifice fly to the left field by Marco Alquiros.

Janiola kayoes Peña

WYNDEL "Braveheart" Janiola, fifth-ranked IBF junior flyweight contender, scored another big win when he stopped Danilo Peña in the seventh round of the Fistorama mainer at the Cantada Boxing Academy in Taguig Thursday evening.

Janiola used a variety of shots in outclassing his foe for his 15th win (7 KOs) against 2 losses.

In the undercard, featherweight Caesar Amonsot and mini-flyweight Rock 'n Rollen del Castillo from the Tony Aldeguer stable scored impressive wins.

Amonsot, 18, outclassed Ferdinand Sagado by landing an array of powerful blows that forced referee Robert Pacasil Jr. to stop the bout at the 1:52 seconds of the 3rd round.

Del Castillo, 16, scored two knockdowns and pummeled gutsy Ricky Seniego en route to a unanimous decision victory.

In other bouts, Mercito Gesta outboxed Rene Nival; Junarlex Mortel decisioned Chris Dujali; Erik Rapada outpointed Roy Tarasona, and Elden de la Cruz won by split decision over Carlo Jayme. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

All-Filipino climbing team sets sights on Mt. Everest

By Trina Ibarle

IT'S the Filipinos' turn to conquer the roof of the world.

Thirty climbers will be training night and day for three years with a final team of seven getting the historic task of undertaking the country's first-ever expedition to Mt. Everest in May 2007.

Mt. Everest, located in the Himalayan mountain range bordered by Tibet, China and India, is the world's tallest mountain at 29,035 feet. Its icy slopes and cold temperatures as well as deadly avalanches pose a deadly challenge to the Philippine team used to tropical conditions.

The core group of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines Inc. (MFPI), including Transportation and Communications Undersecretary Art Valdez, Butch Sebastian, Fred Jamili, Jong Narciso and federation president Regie Pablo, will spearhead the Philippine expedition.

"This is going to be historic because we are aiming to put the Philippine flag as well as the first Asian woman on top of Mt. Everest. We want to show that the Filipinos can do the impossible," said Valdez during the press launch last Wednesday.

Female adventure racers Janet Belarmino, Noelle Wenceslao and Bukidnon-bred Karina Dayumdon are part of the selection.

Also included are adventure racers Johnny Boy Anonuevo, Ray Sumagaysay, Erwin Emata, Christopher Eyao, Wendell Bamba, Leo Oracion, Larry Honoridez, Levi Nayangahan, Chico Estrera, Surit Palena, Goad Sibayan, and IT Gonzales; mountaineers Choi Aquino, Bubut Tan-Torres, Bobby Mengito, Ariel Ambayec, Wrendolph Pangamba, Joel del Sol and Mon Ruiz; triathletes Danny Dematera, Bobby Acosta and Nick Dimaampo; mountainbikers Lito Manansala and Noy Caimoy; and medical practitioners Dr. Teodoro Esguera, Allan Cabizares, and Valerio Ramos Jr.

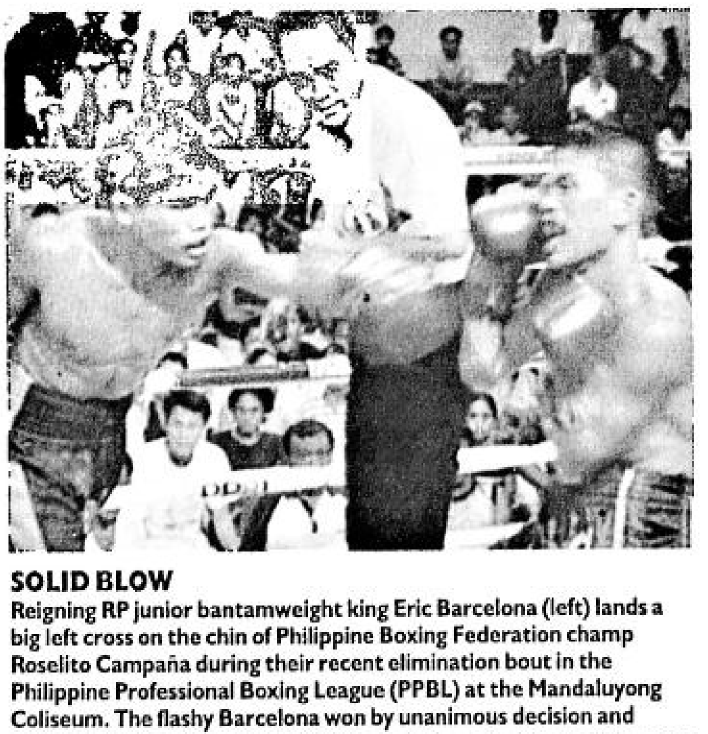
The team's buildup, which will be supported by The North Face mountaineering gear and Uniglobe Travelwear Company Inc., includes training in India's renowned climbing school in June this year as well as other climbs to alpine peaks to acclimatize the members to high altitude pressure and thin mountain air.

However, the team still needs support in terms of funding for the climbing licenses needed, baggage porters and other preparatory climbs before the actual Everest expedition. The team will have to climb four peaks every year to be better prepared.

"It's going to be tough, there has to be a long preparation before the climb. We have to adjust to the cold and height of higher peaks," said Oracion, a multi-awarded adventure racer and a finisher in the tough New Zealand Eco-Challenge last year.

Belarmino, a member of the UP Mountaineers and one of the younger members of the selection, said the expedition is tough but trainable.

"It looks easy when you watch those news features on TV, but we think that it's still going to be challenging."



SOLID BLOW
Reigning RP junior bantamweight king Eric Barcelona (left) lands a big left cross on the chin of Philippine Boxing Federation champ Roselito Campaña during their recent elimination bout in the Philippine Professional Boxing League (PPBL) at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. The flashy Barcelona won by unanimous decision and advanced to the quarterfinals of the made-for-television tournament that lured some of the country's finest bantamweights. In an earlier fight, Robert Dalisay decisioned Bernard Oclos.

La Trinidad XIs rule Baguio meet

BAGUIO CITY—Three teams from La Trinidad, Benguet, brought down different rivals to top their respective age groups in the 4th Joe Arnaiz Cup Football Festival at the Athletic Bowl of Burnham Park here.

Pint-sized Jehan Marquez scored the lone goal that powered Benguet State University-Elementary Team B past Buyagan Elementary School A, 1-0, for the Age Group A (11-12) division crown of the tournament which drew more than 400 players from 143 teams.

Little Flower Children Home Foundation School leaned on MVP Rafael Adrian Nagpala and two-goal hero Denver Kimeu to whip La Trinidad Central School C, 3-0, and bag the Age Group B (9-10) title.

Puguis Elem. School A edged Puguis ES-B via a penalty shootout, 4-3, to settle for third place.

Buyagan Elem. School nipped Wangal Elem. School, 2-1, to rule Age Group D (6-8).

Baguio City Football Association president Leo Cacho Arnaiz, assisted by Teresa Cacho-Arnaiz, widow of Joe Arnaiz; Cookie C. Larrazabal, Emiliano Bugtong and BCFA sec-gen Frael Aquino, awarded the trophies to the winners.

JVC Open badminton slated

DEADLINE for registration for the JVC Open Badminton Championships is on April 2 with the tournament proper, exclusively for players 14 years old and below, firing off April 16 at the SM Megamall.

Entry forms are available at the marketing department of SM malls at North Edsa, Megamall, Southmall, Manila, Fairview, Sucat, Bicutan, Sta. Mesa and Pampanga, according to the organizing IMG. For inquiries, call Alma Ledesma (0917-8152908) or Joann Enriquez (0918-5094845).

The tournament, designed to discover talents who could be trained for future national teams, will be launched on March 27 and 28 with a clinic and exhibition matches at the SM North Edsa.

Events on tap in the two-month-long tournament are the boys' and girls' singles and doubles events and mixed doubles. Drawing of lots will be conducted on April 12 at the fifth level of SM Manila's Entertainment Plaza.

A similar clinic-exhibition is slated April 3-4 at SM Baguio while SM Cebu will have its turn on May 8-9. SM Iloilo hosts the event on May 15-16.

The giant electronic firm JVC has been at the forefront of the badminton surge in the country ever since it launched the annual JVC National Open Championships three years ago.

PBA exhibit visits SM North Edsa

SM NORTH Edsa takes its turn to host the mall-hopping PBA interactive summer sports bash beginning today with Sta. Lucia Realty's players expected to grace the event.

Kenneth Duremdes, Marlou Aquino and Dennis Espino have been invited to conduct a workshop for the fans in the morning in a team's day kicking off the day-long activities.

The PBA activity centers will feature touring displays like hand and shoe prints, photo gallery, inflatable basketball hoop, PBA snap shots, Molten basketball museum, a half-court area and a PBA merchandise booth.

The PBA launched the event last week at the SM Megamall where hordes of fans mingled with their favorite players from various PBA ballclubs. The PBA has lined up a series of sports activities in the next two months at SM malls.

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7 OTSO-OTSO
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9 THE GRUDGE 2
10 KARIBAL

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2 SCOOBY DOO 2	2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 50 FIRST DATES 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30 11:30	2 SCOOBY DOO 2 12:15 2:15 4:15 6:15 8:15	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 SCOOBY DOO 2 2:15 5:15 7:15 9:15 11:15	2 HIGHWAYMEN
3 OTSO-OTSO	4 WISEGIRLS 5 HIGHWAYMEN	Onstage REPERTORY'S DRACULA Mar. 26, 27 & 28	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE MISSING 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00 11:30 4 LOVE ACTUALLY 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20 10:45	3 50 FIRST DATES 4 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 50 FIRST DATES	6 SCOOBY DOO 2 7 THE MISSING		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 HIGHWAYMEN 1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10 11:10	5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

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4 LOVE ACTUALLY

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3 SCOOBY DOO-2
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SCOOBY-DOO 2
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Banar stakes crown

REIGNING titlist Florencio Banar battles veteran internationalist Romy del Rosario today in the Search for Tanduay the No. 1 Billiards Player at the Robinson's Galleria.

It will be Banar's first title defense in this event sponsored by Tanduay, Robinson's Malls, Accel, Hope the Luxury Cigarettes and Rommel's Billiards—the official table. Banar wrested the crown from Laguna's Johnson Vita, 5-2.

Banar will be going up against the 51-year-old Del Rosario, winner of the Tokyo Open 9-Ball in 1997.

The match will be aired over the National Broadcasting Network from 8-9 tonight, with the blow-by-blow accounts delivered by Danny Romero and Recah Trinidad.

"I'm expecting the worst, because my opponent is good, but I'll try my best," said Banar, a former Southeast Asian Games silver medalist.

Del Rosario said the outcome will largely depend on the breaks.

To be the new champion, Del Rosario has to win twice against Banar in this event conceptualized by Tanduay advertising manager Larry Li and supported by Tanduay marketing manager Andres Co.

Interested parties may inquire with the Corporate Billiards League secretariat at 09189219934 or may email corporatebilliardsleague@yahoo.com.

World marks

EAST MEADOW, New York—France's Frederic Bousquet and Trinidad's George Bovell grabbed individual short course world records Thursday and one relay world record fell at the US men's collegiate swimming championships.

Bousquet broke the 50m freestyle short course world record in winning the title in 21.10 seconds.

"I still can't realize I broke the record," said Bousquet, who improved on the previous record of 21.13 set by Briton Mark Foster in January 2001 in Paris. "It is true that these championships were my main objective, but had you told me I would beat the world record, I never would have believed it.

"I really felt great today at the warm-ups," he added. "I knew it was going to be a great day for me. Now, I am going to concentrate on the French Nationals to try to earn a berth at the Olympics. Failure cannot be an option. I have to do everything.

George Bovell of Trinidad and Tobago broke the 200m individual medley short course world record with a time of 1 min 53.93 seconds in the final. **AFP**

Vasquez cops bantam plum

LOS ANGELES—Israel Vasquez of Mexico stopped Jose Luis Valbuena of Venezuela in the 12th round Thursday to win the vacant IBF super bantamweight title.

Vasquez floored Valbuena with a right, and the follow-up barrage forced referee James Jen-Kin to stop the fight 34 seconds into the round.

Earlier, Vasquez floored Valbuena in the fourth with a right, while Valbuena had lost two points for low blows. Heading into the 12th, Valbuena had won the last three rounds on the judges' scorecards, hurting Vasquez with hard body blows.

The Mexican, who hurt his opponent late in rounds with straight rights to the head, led on judges' scorecards 105-101, 106-100 and 106-100.

Vasquez (36-3, 27 knockouts) weighed in at 122 pounds, while Valbuena (24-3-1, 14 KOs) was at 121.

Earlier, Jhonny Gonzalez of Mexico scored a six-round knockout over previously unbeaten Roger Gonzalez of the United States, flooring his opponent three times in the sixth round of a scheduled 10-round bantamweight fight. Jhonny Gonzalez (22-4, 20 KOs) was at 118 and Roger Gonzalez (23-1, 16 KOs) was at 119. *AP*

Araneta Center

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APR 8	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
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ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY - LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	KARIBAL
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
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CINEMA-2	KARIBAL
CINEMA-3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CURSE
CINEMA-6	PEEP SHOW
CINEMA-7	TORQUE
CINEMA-8	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	50 FIRST DATES
CINEMA-12	GRUDGE 2
CINEMA-14	GHOSTFIGHTER (R)
CINEMA-15	OTSO OTSO
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
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CINEMA-4	SELDA

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

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1	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:40, 1:50, 4:00 6:10, 8:20	GP
2	SCOOBY DOO 2	11:55, 2:25, 4:55 7:25, 9:55	GP
3	50 FIRST DATES	11:40, 1:35, 3:30, 5:25 7:20, 9:15, 11:10	PG-13
4	HIGHWAYMEN	11:20, 1:20, 3:20 5:20, 7:20, 9:20	R-13

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WISE GIRLS R18 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	SCOOBY DOO 2 GP 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	SCOOBY DOO 2 GP 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25
HIGHWAYMEN R13 12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20	LOVE ACTUALLY R18 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:40	50 FIRST DATES PG13 12:15, 2:10, 4:15, 6:10, 8:15, 10:20

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P13

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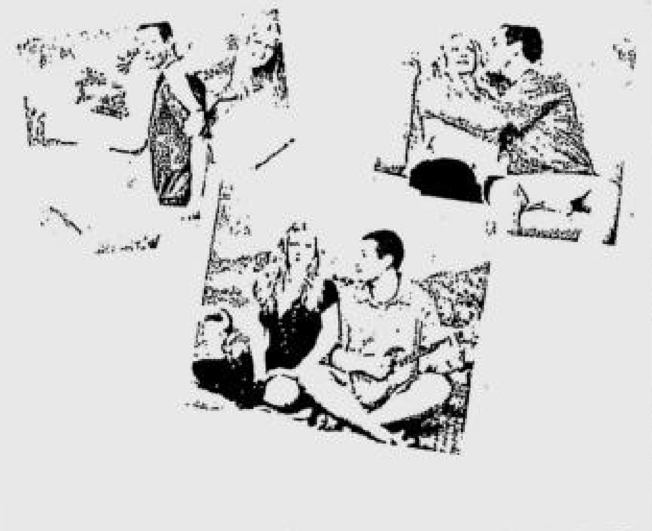

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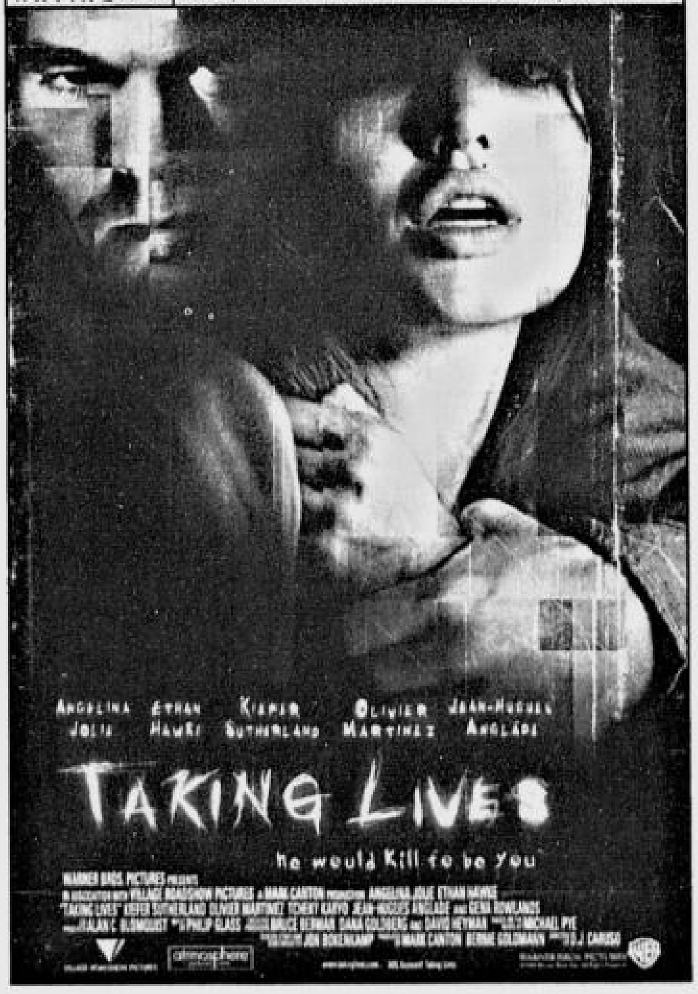

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2 50 FIRST DATES 10.25, 12.40, 2.55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40	3 BUTTERFLY EFFECT 11:55, 2.05, 4:15, 6:25, 8 35, 10:30	4 HIGHWAYMEN 12 20, 2:25, 4 30, 6 35, 8:40, 10:30
5 SCOOBY DOO 2 11:35, 1:40, 3.45, 5.50, 7:55, 10:00	6 THE GRUDGE 2 12:20, 2.25, 4.30, 6 35, 8:40, 10:30	7 OTSO-OTSO 10:35, 12 50, 3.05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
8 WISE GIRLS 11:35, 1.50, 4.05, 6.20, 8:35, 10:30	9 LOVE ACTUALLY 10.40, 1:25, 4:10, 6.55, 9:40	10 DEATH CURSE 12:20, 2 25, 4:30, 6:35, 8.40, 10:30

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1 SCOOBY DOO 2 — 10:15, 12:10, 2:05, 4:00, 5:55, 7:50, 9:50

2 THE GRUDGE 2 11.15, 1.05, 2.55, 4.45, 6.35, 8.25, 10.00	3 WISE GIRLS 11:55, 2 00, 4.05, 6.10, 8:15, 10:00	4 DEATH CURSE 11:15, 1 05, 2 55, 4 45, 6 35, 8 25, 10 00
5 OTSO-OTSO 10 10, 12 35, 2:40, 4 55, 7:10, 9.40	6 HIGHWAYMEN 10:40, 12 40, 2 40, 4 40, 6.40, 8 35, 10.00	7 50 FIRST DATES 10 50, 1 00, 3 10, 5 20, 7 30, 9 50

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1 HIGHWAYMEN — 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
2 50 FIRST DATES — 11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10

3 KARIBAL 11.50, 1:40, 3:30, 5.20, 7.10, 9.00	4 SCOOBY DOO 2 11:20, 1.40, 4.00, 6.20, 8 40	5 SCOOBY DOO 2 10 50, 1. 10, 3.30, 5.50, 8.10, 10.30
6 THE GRUDGE 2 10:40, 12 40, 2 40, 4 40, 6.40, 8:40	7 BUTTERFLY EFFECT 11:00, 1.00, 3 00, 5 00, 7 00, 9.00	8 OTSO-OTSO 11:00, 1:30, 4 00, 6 30, 9:00

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1 SCOOBY DOO 2 — 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2 OTSO-OTSO — 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6 05, 8:30

3 BUTTERFLY EFFECT 12 00, 2.25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:00	4 THE CURSE 11:50, 1:45, 3 40, 5 35, 7:30, 9:00	5 HIGHWAYMEN 11 25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6.45, 8:35
6 THE GRUDGE 2 11.40, 1.45, 3.50, 5.55, 8:10	7 50 FIRST DATES 11:45, 1 55, 4.05, 6 15, 8 30	8 THE NIGHTMARE 11 00, 12 55, 2 50, 4 45, 6 40, 8.35

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4 KARIBAL	4 50 FIRST DATES	4 50 FIRST DATES
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2 OTSO-OTSO	2 LOVE ACTUALLY	2 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO	3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 OTSO-OTSO
4 THE CURSE	4 THE GRUDGE 2	4 THE GRUDGE 2
5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 CARMEN	5 SCOOBY DOO 2
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2 50 FIRST DATES	2 GOTHIKA	2 DUPLEX
3 KARIBAL	3 OTSO-OTSO	3 OTSO-OTSO
4 DEATH CURSE	4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	4 WATER DEMON
5 OTSO-OTSO	5 CARMEN	5 TOTALLY BLONDE
6 THE GRUDGE 2	6 DRAGON VS. NINJA	6 GOTHIKA

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Spurs sparkle; Hawks fly high

SAN ANTONIO—Manu Ginobili scored 14 of his 17 points in the second half as the San Antonio Spurs pulled away following the late ejection of Ben Wallace to defeat the Detroit Pistons, 84-75, Thursday.

"I would rather be in the locker room than playing in a ... game like that," Wallace said afterward.

Detroit trailed 71-64 when Wallace was called for a loose ball foul with 6:07 remaining. Referee Steve Javie ejected Wallace for heatedly complaining.

The win pulled the Spurs within two games of Midwest Division leader Minnesota with 10 games remaining for both teams.

In Atlanta, Bob Sura had 23 points and a career-high 15 rebounds as Atlanta took advantage of the absence of Baron Davis to defeat New Orleans, 84-76.

Davis, who leads the team with an average of 23 points, had a sprained left ankle. His status for Friday's home game against Phoenix was uncertain. *AP*

Complete results:

Atlanta 84, New Orleans 76; San Antonio 84, Detroit 75; Washington 103, LA Clippers 94.

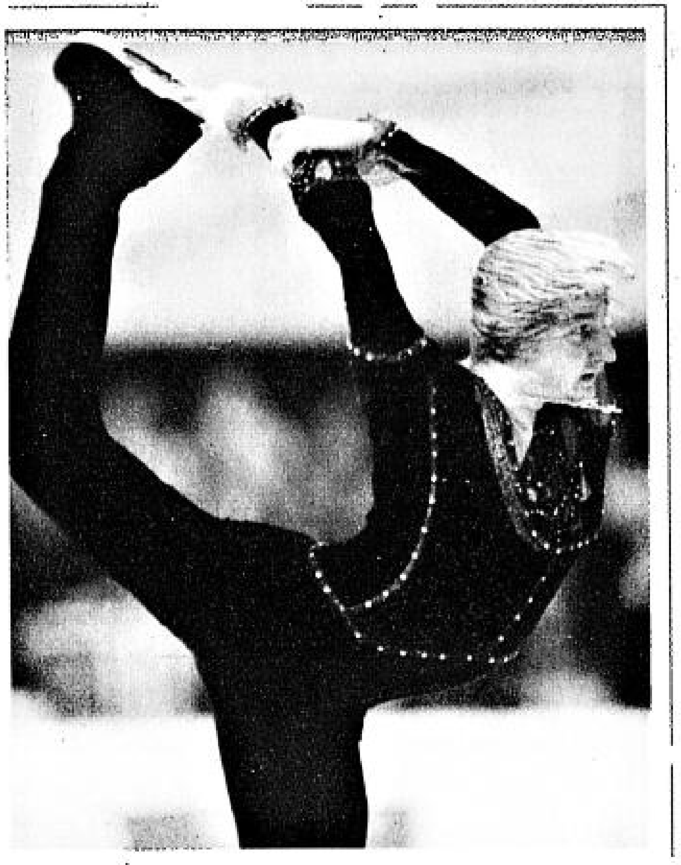
Alabama shocks Syracuse

NEW YORK—Earnest Shelton scored 22 points to inspire eighth-seeded Alabama to an 80-71 win over fifth-seeded Syracuse in a Phoenix Regional semi-final at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament Thursday.

Alabama (20-12) pulled away from the defending national champion in the second half, five days after stunning top-ranked Stanford.

Chuck Davis and Kennedy Winston both added 19 points to help Alabama advance to an NCAA regional final for the first time in the school's history.

The Crimson Tide now face Connecticut Saturday with a Final Four berth at stake. *Reuters*



FREE SKATING CHAMP

World champion Evgeni Plushenko of Russia performs in the Men's Free Skating competition at the 2004 World Figure Skating Championships in Dortmund on Thursday. Plushenko had two quadruple jumps and a unique combination–triple axel-half loop-triple flip–to soundly beat France's Brian Joubert for his third world title. AFP

Aussie up as Woods stumbles

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Australian Adam Scott fired his lowest round of the season to take the first-round lead at The Players Championship on Thursday.

World number one Tiger Woods, by contrast, tied his worst round at the TPC at Sawgrass, slumping to a three-over-par 75.

Scott's seven-under 65 gave him a one-stroke lead over Duffy Waldorf and Kevin Sutherland. Waldorf ended his round in erratic fashion with an eagle, a double bogey and a birdie in the last three holes.

South Korea's KJ Choi, Thomas Bjorn of Denmark and Bob Burns were in joint fourth place on five-under 67. Burns was the only player among the leaders to enjoy a bogey-free round in the tournament widely regarded as the fifth "major". Brandt Jobe, Scott Verplank, Spain's Sergio Garcia, Ernie Els of South Africa and Ireland's Padraig Harrington all recorded 68s.

WOODS

Woods is now eight-over for his last four rounds and has not carded a round of par or better since his 67 in the Bay Hill Invitational last Thursday.

"I didn't think I played that poorly," Woods told reporters.

"I hit a few shots in there close and didn't make them and when I needed a par putt early in the round, I didn't make those.

"I put myself in position to make putts and I made nothing, and then towards the end I made a few putts to keep me where I'm at right now." Scott, 23, who was tied for third at Bay Hill last week, continued his fine form at Sawgrass with five birdies in the first nine holes and three more coming home. His only bogey came at the par-four 15th.

Except for a missed cut at the Sony Open in Hawaii in January, the Australian has been consistent.

He has nothing but top-10s to his name, a seventh at the Mercedes Championship, a tie for ninth at the WGC-World Match Play Championship and his tie for third last week.

Defending champion Davis Love III ballooned to a five-over-par 77 on Thursday and may not play in the second round due to a recurring back ailment. *Reuters*

Rookie leads Kraft tilt with 66; Annika 5 off

PALM SPRINGS, California—Rookie Aree Song shot a six-under 66 to take the clubhouse lead on Thursday in the opening round of the $1.6 million LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship.

Mexico's Lorena Ochoa and Scotland's Catriona Matthew were tied for second, one shot behind as play continued in the California desert.

The 17-year-old Aree, who turned pro in August, is playing in her first major as a professional and is making her fifth appearance at the Kraft Nabisco.

Aree took 29 putts on Thursday and hit 10 of 14 fairways. She got off to a blistering start, birdieing the first, sixth and eighth holes to move to three-under after nine.

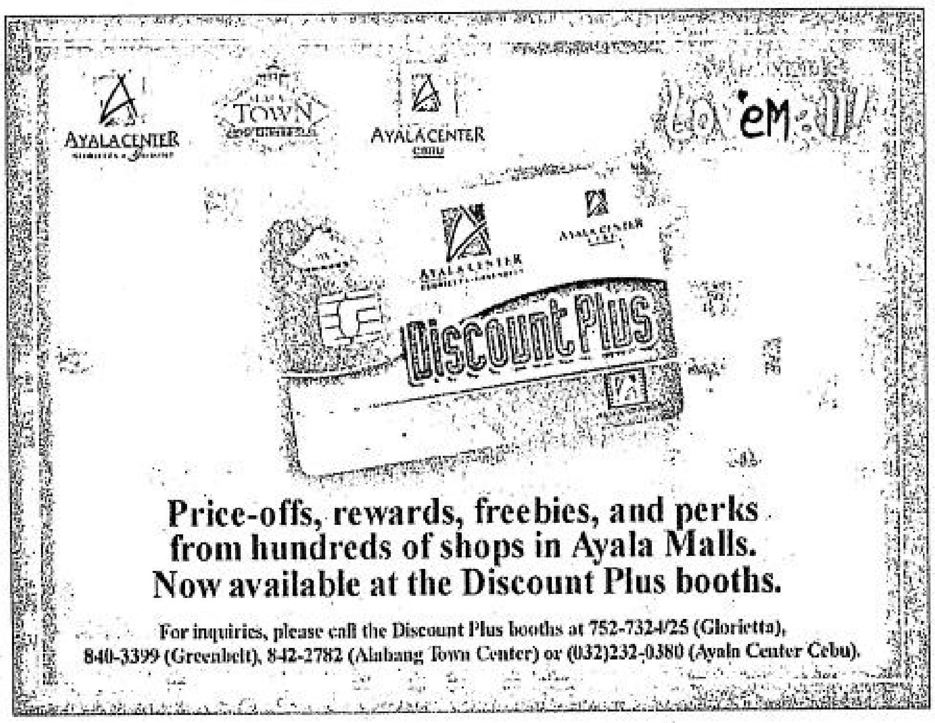
Four years ago, at the age of 13, she tied for 10th at this event, shooting a 68 in the third round.

Aree (formerly Wongluekiet) was born in Thailand but is in the process of becoming a South Korean national. She moved to the US at age 11 with her Korean father and Thai mother.

In 2002, Aree was named American women's amateur golfer of the year.

Taiwan's Candie Kung and American Kelly Robbins were three shots behind Aree after carding 69s on Thursday.

World No. 1 Annika Sorenstam opened the tournament with a modest 71. *AFP*



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Spadea outlasts Blake

MIAMI—Vince Spadea needed seven hours and 10 minutes to dispose of fellow American James Blake in the first round of the Nasdaq-100 Open on Thursday.

Spadea, who won his first title in 223 attempts three weeks ago in Scottsdale, outlasted Blake, 6-7 (12-14), 7-6 (7-4), 6-1, in the Masters Series event.

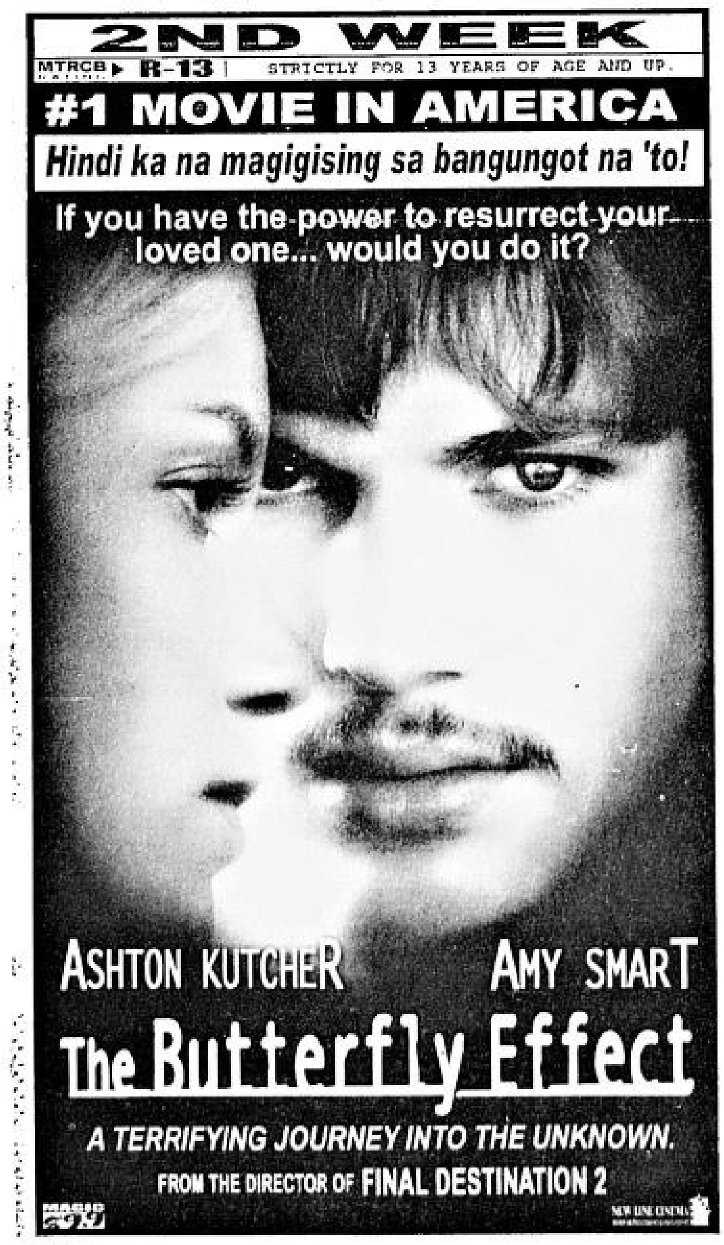
The pair were locked together at 5-5 in the first set when showers sent spectators at the Crandon Park Tennis Center scuttling for cover.

The rain kept the players in the locker room for four hours and 51 minutes and meant the match did not eventually finish until 2235 local time.

Spadea faces Russian Marat Safin in the second round.

Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador and Sweden's Thomas Enqvist also endured a frustrating time.

Lapentti finally progressed, 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, nearly 24 hours after they started playing. *Reuters*



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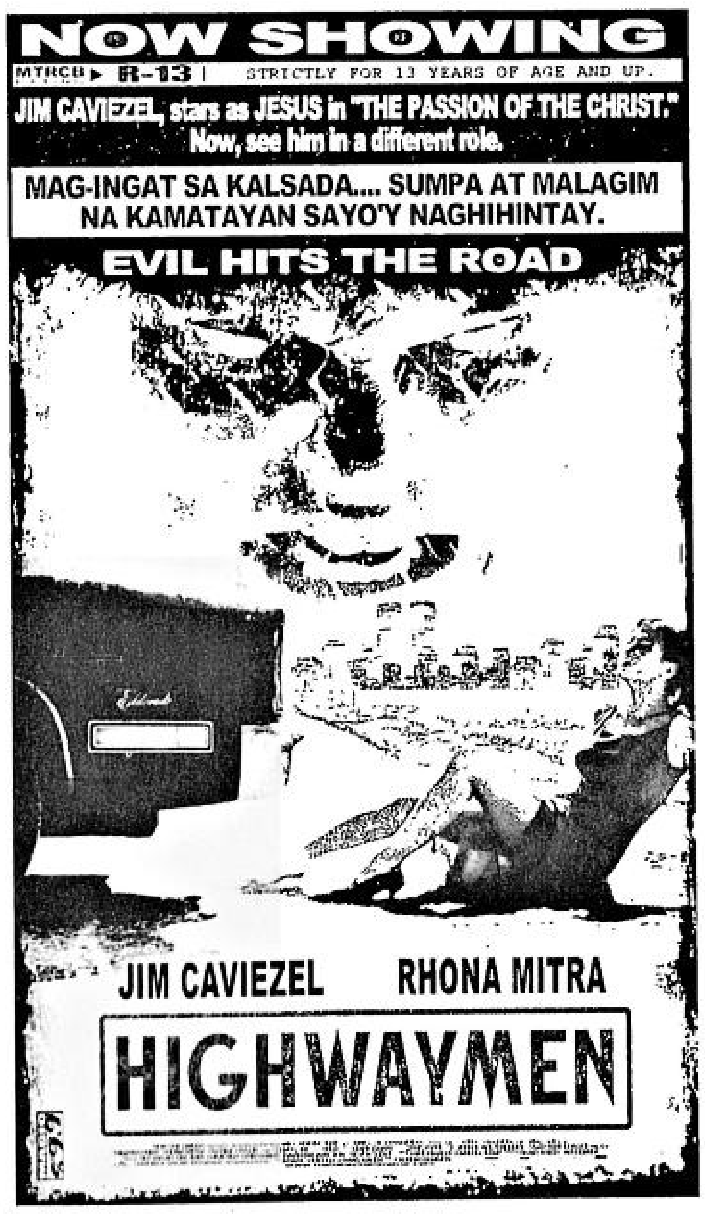

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Spring, Adamson win

SPRING Cooking Oil-San Pablo 7 Lakes and Manila-Adamson University's Falcons hurdle their respective rivals Thursday at the start of the Panasonic 7 Lakes Invitational Cup basketball tournament at the Aquino Stadium in San Pablo City.

Spring-SP of Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino toppled Cagayan de Oro, 79-65, after coach Luigi Trillo's Falcons had beaten the UA-Pampanga Pelicans, 92-84.

Hosted by Mayor Aquino and sponsored by Sulpicio Lines, the event serves as one of the mini-tourneys organized by the National Basketball Conference prior to the opening of the national championship on May 22 in Baguio City.

Hampered by the absence of Nani Epondulan, Spring-SP fell behind in the second and third quarters but erupted for 28 points in the last canto to pull through.

ADAMSON 92—Abadia 25, Tiongco 15, Gandarosa 14, Cabahug 10, Bono 9, Alonzo 6, Poloyapoy 5, Tajonera 4, Catabay 2, Hugnatan 2, Hate 0.

UA-PAMPANGA 84—Bautista 20, Tierra 15, Yambao 12, Bansil 8, Anacan 8, Ruiz 6, Bognot 4, Duyag 2, Enrique 2, Valerio 0, Mendoza 0.

PADILLA: Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo 7 Lakes co-owner

Checkmate classes enrollment open

ENROLLMENT for the Milo Checkmate summer chess classes is now in full swing at the MCC office at the 4/F of mini-arcade J & F Divino Bldg., 967 Aurora Blvd., beside St. Joseph Church near Anonas St. in Quezon City.

The first batch of classes will start on Tuesday at the following venues and schedules: Robinsons Place (3rd level) in Fairview, QC—1:30-5 p.m.; Jollibee-Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan—1:30-5 p.m.; St. Benedict College (HS student lounge) in Alabang Hills—1:30-5 p.m.; Notre Dame of Greater Manila Area (HS Science Bldg.) in Caloocan City—8-11:30 a.m.; Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (Badminton Bldg.)—8-11:30 a.m., and J & F Divino Bldg. —9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-6 p.m.

For details, call MCC at 826-8560 and 0916-8521069.

Lim cage camp

SAMBOY Lim, one of the PBA's 25 greatest players, will conduct a basketball camp starting on April 12 at the adidas Sports Kamp, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Other dates of the Skywalker's Basketball Camp are April 13, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25 and May 2.

Classes will be held from 3 to 5 p.m., 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and 8 to 10 p.m.

Registration fee is P4,999. Interested parties may contact Anna at 531-7554 or Jaymee at 0917-60773738.

"This is entirely different from other training camps," said Lim. "We will not only teach participants fundamental drills and plays but also develop proper attitude, practical basketball sense and game skills."

The clinic will also promote sportsmanship, camaraderie and healthy lifestyle.

Part of the proceeds will go to street children, said Lim.

5-cocker on today

IT WILL be a return bout among big-time cockers in Las Piñas Coliseum's "BRBL 5-Cock Derby" starting at 5 p.m. today. Derby sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000 while hosts are Boy de Roca and Boy Royo.

The team of sportsman Matt Bitanga, Dicky Lim and Pat Debuldago (Golden Circle I), winner of the "Battle of the Heavyweights 7-Cock Derby" held last March 6 at LPC, looms as the top favorite in today's more than 70-fight schedule.

Other contenders are 2004 World Slasher champs Rudy Salud, and Lito Orillaza, Patrick Antonio, Sonny Lagon, Pol Estrellado, Boy Royo, Joey and Buboy de los Santos, Muroy Dolorico, Mayor Ashley Arayata, Gerry Ramos, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Louie Cua, Mayor Jessie Viceo, Butchoy Olano, Alfie Sy, Gov. Ito Ynares, ASF Group, Blandy Tolentino, Jet and Joel Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers, and William Go.

"Derby fans can expect another tight battle for the championship, just like what happened in the Battle of the Heavyweights derby," said LPC manager Alex Tobias.

For details, contact 873-1040 and 0920-5609404 (look for Gerry or Julius).

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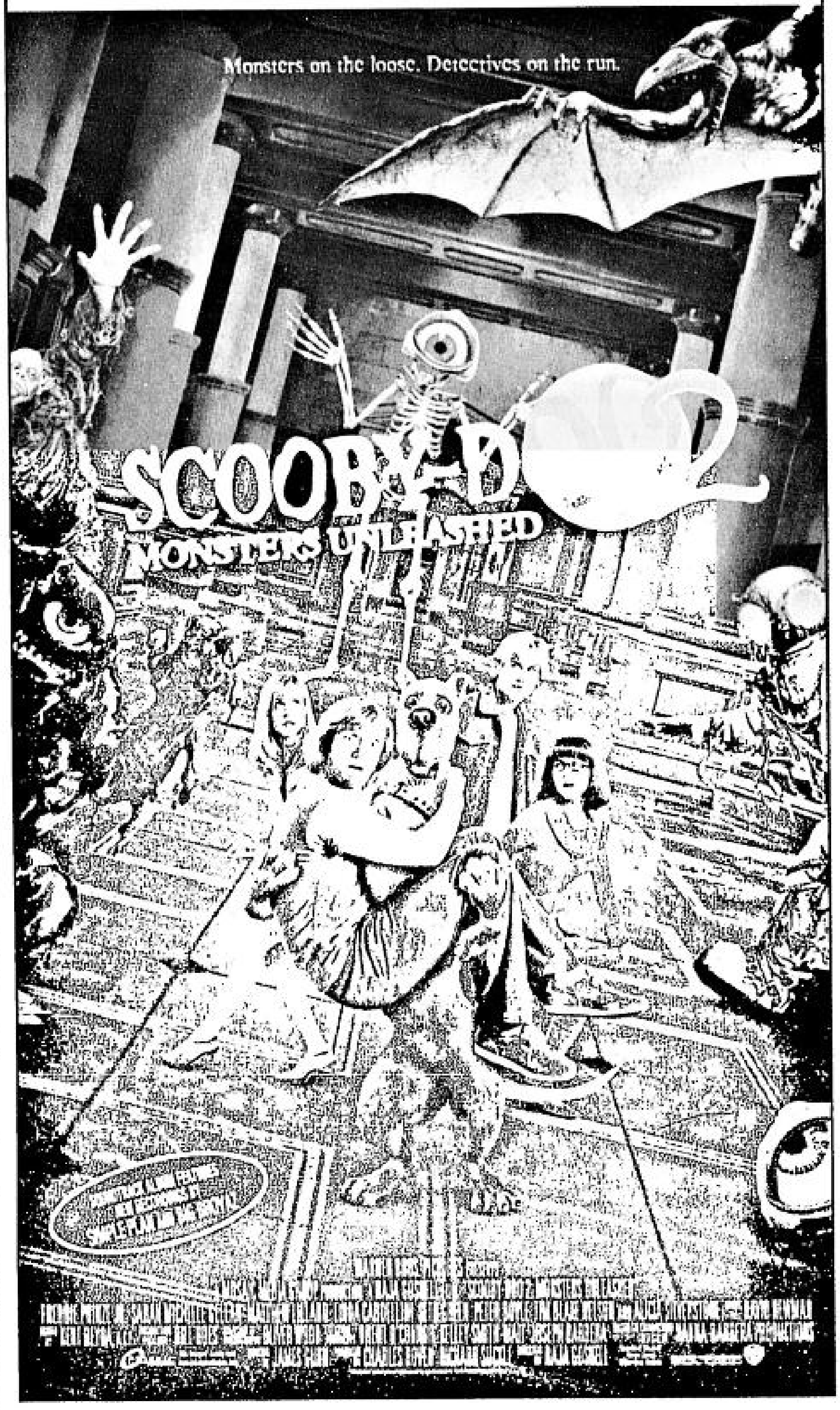

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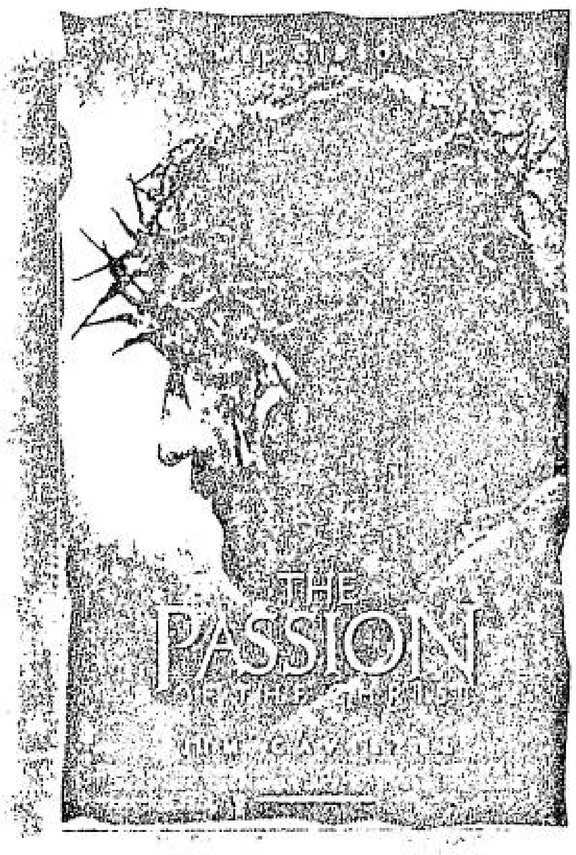
OPENS MARCH 31 AT AYALA CINEMAS



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Cinema 2 - 11 50 AM, 2 30 PM, 5:10
Cinema 3 - 12 20 PM, 3 00, 5 40, 8 20, 11 00

GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1 - 11 45 AM, 2 40 PM, 5.35, 8.30, 11:25
Cinema 2 - 12 55 PM, 3:50, 6:45, 9:40
Cinema 3 (THX) 1 25 PM
Cinema 6 - 11 10 AM, 2.05 PM, 5.00, 7:55, 10.50

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 2 - 11 25 AM, 1 35 PM, 4 25
Cinema 3 - 1 00 PM 3:30, 6 00, 8 50
Cinema 4 - 11 40 AM, 2:10 PM, 4 40, 10 00

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:45 PM, 3:30, 6:15, 9 00
Cinema 2 - 10 30 AM, 1.15 pm, 4:00, 8.45, 9.30

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 11.50 AM, 2.35 PM, 5:20, 8:05
Cinema 2 - 11 20 AM, 2:05 PM, 4 50, 7:35, 10.20

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1 (THX) - 2:05 PM, 4 50, 7:35, 10.20
Cinema 2 (THX) - 2:35 PM, 5 20, 10 50
Cinema 3 - 12 20 PM, 3.05, 5:50, 11.20
Cinema 4 - 9 05 PM, 11:50
Cinema 5 - 9:40 PM

For inquiries, call 752-7880 or 82 (Glorietta 4), 893-4254 (Glorietta 1), 757-3861 to 62 (Greenbelt 3), 750-4180 to 82 (Greenbelt 1) 850-8931 (Alabang Town Center) and 032-4158488 to 89 (Ayala Center Cebu)

MTRCB RATING: PARENTAL GUIDANCE 13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 yrs. old because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities.

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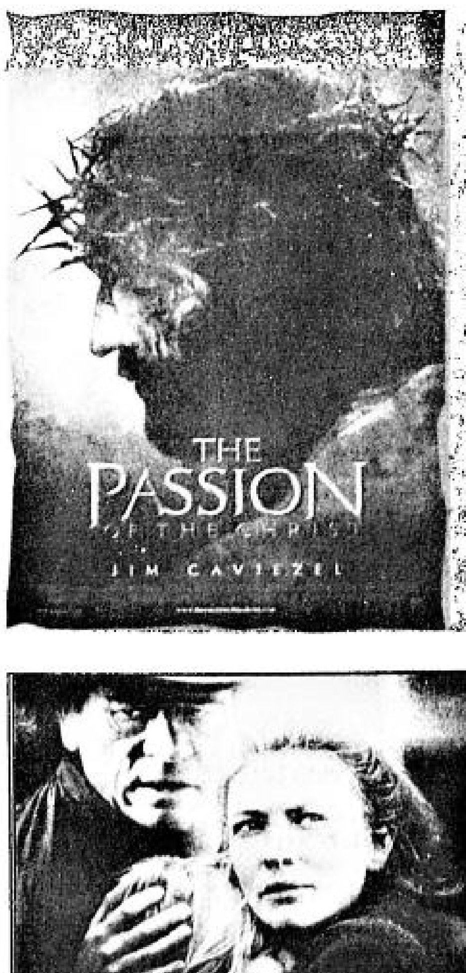

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
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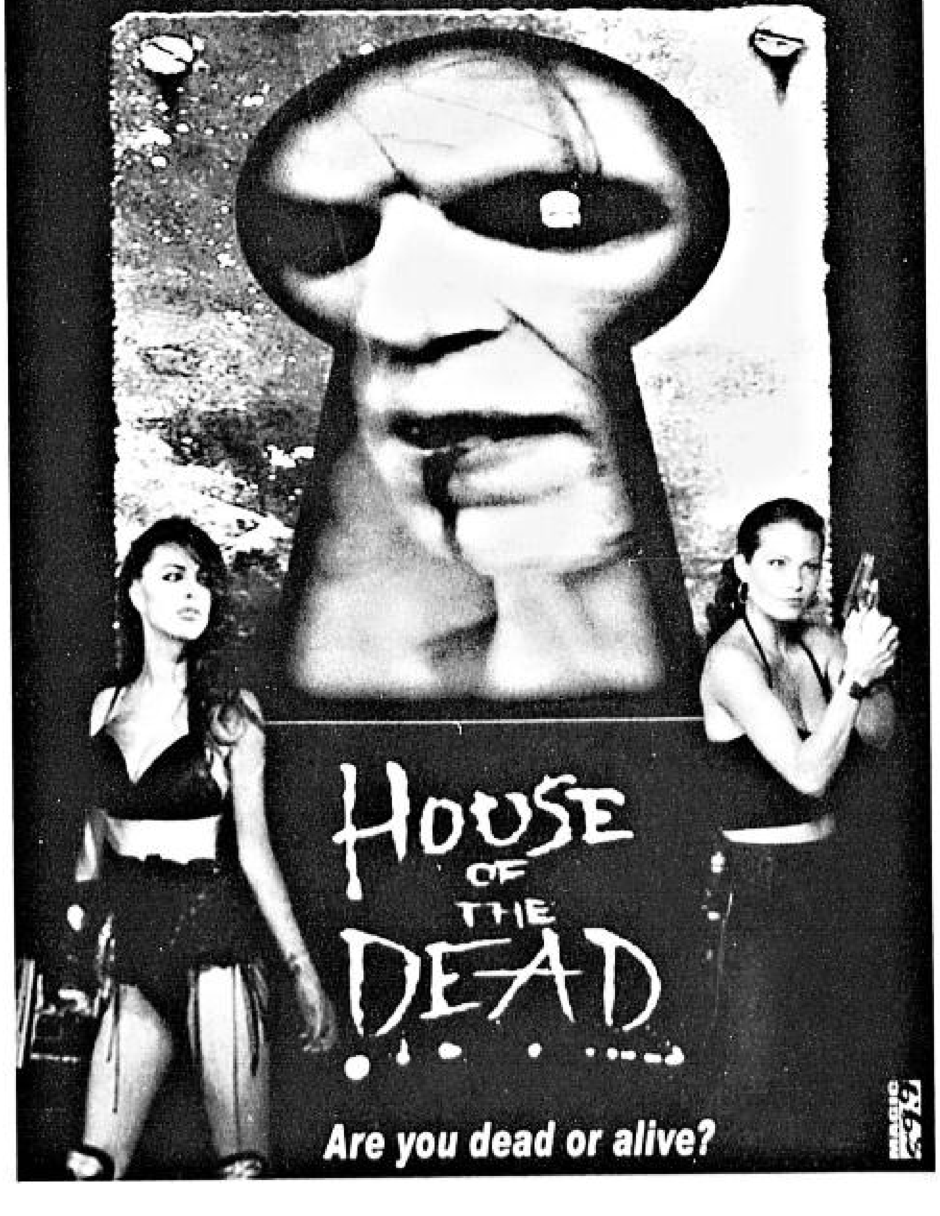

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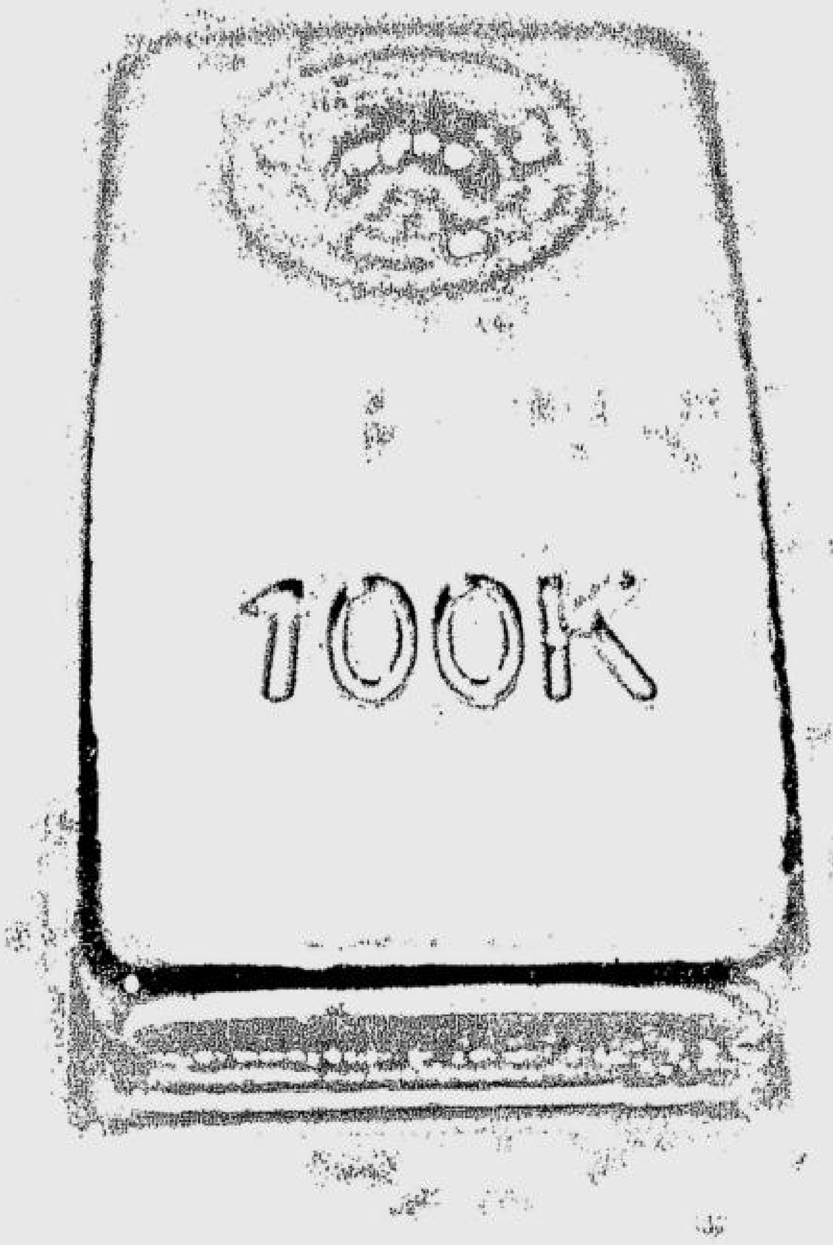
Are you dead or alive?

Passion



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GSX A/T	842,000	100,000	63,978	44,066	35,014	25,102	20,481	17,564	
GLX A/T	802,000	100,000	60,360	41,574	33,036	23,684	19,324	16,570	
GL GAS	693,000	100,000	50,501	34,784	27,645	19,819	16,171	13,864	
DLX GAS (15.20%dp)	658,000	100,000	47,335	32,603	25,914	18,578	15,159	12,995	
DLX GAS (50%dp)	658,000	329,000	27,417	18,278	14,561	10,430	8,503	7,230	
RAV4 4x2 (10.02%dp)	998,000	100,000	78,088	53,785	42,729	30,633	24,994	21,298	
RAV4 4x2 (50%dp)	998,000	499,000	41,955	28,884	22,952	16,440	13,403	11,405	10,697

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BUSINESS

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LOW SULFUR

Gov't says 1.4M jobs created in January

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said new jobs generated throughout the country more than trebled in January, indicating a pick-up in business activity despite perceived risks related to the coming elections.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri, citing results of the January 2004 Round of Labor Force Survey of the National Statistics Office, said the economy created 1.4 million new jobs during the month compared with only 414,000 recorded in the same period last year.

"In the last three years, employment has grown annually by about 1.06 million compared to just a third of a million per year under the previous administration," Neri said.

The survey showed that the services and industry sectors contributed the bulk of the increase in new jobs during the month. The services sector generated 940,000 new jobs from only 284,000 in 2003. The industry sector, on the other hand, created 466,000 new jobs, or a reversal from last year's job loss of 14,000.

Neri likewise stressed that the quality of work available for the country's job seekers may have improved, as implied by the result of the survey.

The survey showed that the number of people who worked at least 40 hours a week increased by 11.2 percent from last year, while the number of people who worked less than 40 hours decreased by 5 percent.

Neri said the figure could indicate that the number of people working full-time, vis-a-vis the number of people working part-time, has increased. The figure, however, could also mean that more work hours were just being required of laborers.

The country's chief economic planner said the increase in the number of jobs was an indication the government's job-generation programs were meeting their objectives.

However, Neri said the increase in the number of jobs was still not enough to temper the rise in unemployment. He said the 1.4 million new jobs during the month was outpaced by the 1.7 million new members of the labor force.

"The increase in labor force of 5.2 percent, which is even higher than the 2.3 percent population growth rate, outpaced the gains in employment. This is because more Filipinos are joining the labor market at a much faster pace than the record number of jobs our economy has created," he added.

The NSO earlier reported that unemployment rate in January rose to 11 percent from 10.6 percent the previous year because of the huge number of new entrants to the labor force. The number of new entrants during the month stood at 1.7 million, or 5.2 percent higher than the year-ago figure.

Peso closes weaker at 56.425 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO yesterday closed weaker at 56.425 to the dollar from Thursday's 56.41 as strong corporate demand overwhelmed meager foreign exchange inflows.

This developed as foreign portfolio inflows to the country in the first two weeks of March further slowed down compared to the previous month, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas documents.

Portfolio inflows during the first two weeks of this month hit only $5.4 million compared to $19 million during the same period a month ago.

Inflows worth $92 million were reduced by some $86.6 million worth of outflows.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco said the peso's depreciation yesterday was brought by large demand from the manufacturing and power sectors.

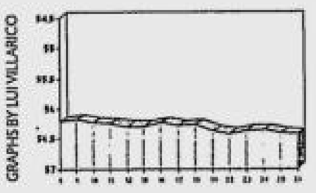
"But supply from OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances, offshore inflows and short-selling by some banks mitigated the depreciation," Tetangco said.

Volume at the Philippine Dealing System yesterday stood at $80.96 million.

PESO/B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 56.425 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 26, 2004

¥ 105.69 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 26, 2004

GOLD: $416.30-416.80

per ounce Hong Kong, March 24, 2004

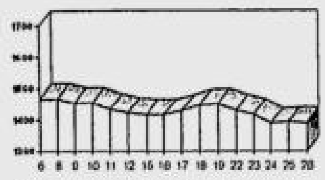
INTEREST RATES

March 26, 2004-MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 26-Mar-04	MART1 25-Mar-04
1 Month	7.7517	7.7533
3 Months	8.19	8.1817
6 Months	9.1397	9.153
1 Year	9.945	9.9817
2 Years	10.6783	10.73
3 Years	11.4982	11.5589
4 Years	11.7733	11.805
5 Years	12.1933	12.2017
7 Years	12.47	12.5067
10 Years	12.6554	12.6769
20 Years	12.9982	13.0643
25 Years	13.2875	13.3518

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks close lower

STOCKS closed lower yesterday as the peso slid near its record low and uncertainty swirled over the May 10 elections.

"Right now, there is an absence of catalysts to move the market. The weakening of the peso is adding to the uncertainty," said Oliver Plana, research head at Asiasec Equities Inc.

The peso traded at 56.41 to 56.435 to the dollar in morning trade yesterday, a shade shy of its record low of 56.45 hit earlier in the week.

Analysts said worries about political stability were also weighing on the market as campaigning revs up ahead of the national polls.

The 33-share main index slipped 0.16 percent or 2.2 points to 1,390.92 points. It has so far lost 3.57 percent since the start of the year.

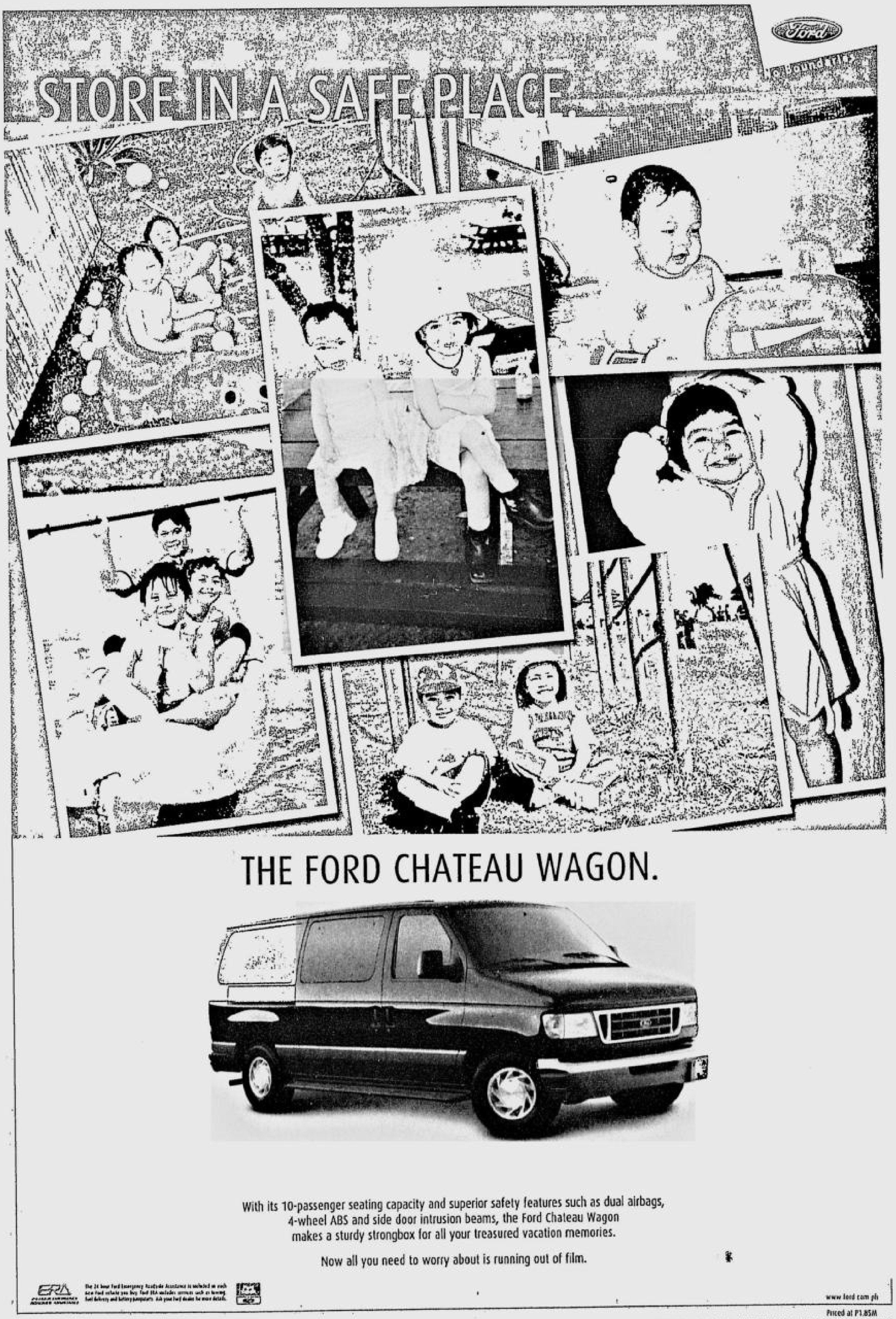
Ayala Land Inc., the country's largest property developer, lost 2.94 percent or 15 centavos to P4.95.

Traders said investors have adopted a cautious stance on Meralco as the Supreme Court has yet to rule whether the firm can implement a rate increase this year.

Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), the country's third-largest mobile firm and 45-percent owned by PLDT, finished 1.2 percent or two centavos lower at P1.64.

Second-ranked mobile phone provider Globe Telecom bucked the downward trend, gaining P5 to P800 as bargain hunters bought back the issue after its 5.49 percent fall on Wednesday.

Reuters



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Bantay Bilihin

PRICE MONITOR

In Metro Manila

Bantay Bilihin is the Department of Trade and Industry's program that aims to address various components of price and supply stabilization. This price monitoring guide is the consumer's reference on the average prices of selected basic goods and prime commodities. The items listed below are some of the most common necessities we buy.

DTI and the Department of Agriculture monitor around 26 select markets in Metro Manila that are accessible and with heavy consumer traffic and trading activity.

Prices in different markets may be higher or lower than the average price.

BASIC & PRIME COMMODITIES (Monitored by DTI)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE (As of March 22, 2004)	PRICE RANGE		AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (February 2004)
Canned Fish (155g)			7.00	10.00	
555	-	9.10			8.16
Youngstown	-	8.79			8.74
Hakata	-	8.11			8.14
Mester	-	8.28			8.23
Ligo	-	8.44			8.41
Instant Noodles (Chicken/55g)			4.00	5.75	
Lucky Me	-	4.73			4.69
Maggi	5.25	5.15			5.18
Payless	-	4.32			4.23
Nissin Ramen	-	4.90			4.96
Powdered Filled Milk (180g)			29.25	36.00	
Alaska	36.00	33.01			31.94
Bear Brand	36.00	33.26			32.12
Coffee (25g Refill)			10.75	15.50	
Blend 45	-	12.96			12.11
Nescafe	14.40	14.33			13.87
Cafe Puro	-	12.67			12.70
Great Taste	-	13.02			12.96
Laundry Soap (400g)			21.75	27.00	
Perla	24.00	24.26			24.08
Wheel	22.00	22.84			22.64
Detergent Bar (480g)			13.00	24.50	
Surf	14.20	14.70			14.70
Mr. Clean	--	14.36			14.64
Tide	20.00	22.97			23.20
Breeze	23.95	23.40			23.40

COMMODITY (Monitored by DA-BAS)	AVERAGE PRICE (March 20, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Week Ago (March 13, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (February 2004)
Meat and Poultry			
Beef Brisket (per kilo)	143.98	143.68	142.40
Egg (Medium/per piece)	3.56	3.56	3.36
Fish (per kilo)			
Bangus	93.45	96.27	93.43
Tilapia	70.64	73.43	73.82
Galunggong	76.27	75.73	67.96
Rice (per kilo)			
Ordinary	18.50	18.60	18.60
Special	22.42	22.42	22.15
Premium	25.70	25.70	25.69
Fancy	32.76	32.76	32.80
Sugar (per kilo)			
Refined	26.53	26.53	26.81
Brown	22.40	22.40	22.73

MEAT AND POULTRY (Monitored by DA-BAI)	FARMGATE PRICE As of March 22, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	WHOLESALE PRICE As of March 22, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE As of March 22, 2004 (Price per Kilo)
Chicken (Dressed)	46.54	68.75	95.30
Pork Liempo	87.69	113.69	143.58

CEMENT (40kg Bag)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of March 22, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE (Per Bag, as of Mar 19, 2004)
Island	175.00	129.00
Union	125.00	159.88

For inquiries, write or call
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection
2/F Trade and Industry Building, 361 Gen. J. Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200
Tel.: 8977-DTI • Website: www.dti.gov.ph • Text: Type DTI <space><your message>send to 2920

For Meat and Poultry, call the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry - 920-3906
For other Agricultural Commodities, call the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics - 371-2078

Debates and pieces

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

ALL RIGHT, I have to be frank with you on my fearless forecast for the election. You see, I merely base my prediction from the bits and pieces of information we get in media.

And I predict that—and I say this with confidence—as things stand, it looks like the election is seemingly going to push through, most probably, assuming it is not called off.

It is easy to tell that the election is going on schedule by reading newspapers, listening to radio, and watching television—all at the same time, while you are sleeping.

Based on news reports, violence already took place in Ilocos Sur—the kind of violence which had something to do, supposedly, with politics.

Sure, in that province of the famous CS, people get killed—with or without any election. But the recent violence was related to the election, because news reports said so.

***

THAT is not debatable. In this country, when news organizations talk about violence, it is taken as nothing but the whole truth.

So much so that even the financial markets always react, in a bad way, to such news about violence. That kind of credibility!

And so the business community must be correct after all in wanting to wait until after the elections to decide what to do with the sagging economy.

Industrial output is down, meaning, less and less goods are being produced in our factories; meaning, more and more jobs are in danger of being lost.

Meantime, our leaders are busy putting the blame on one another on why they are not taking part in the "great debate."

What a country!

***

AMONG the presidential candidates, only Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva were eager to slug it out in that "great debate." Not surprisingly, it went ... well, pffft.

PRE-DEVALUATION
SALE (Up to March 31)
FINGER BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR
FLYPAD
BODYTONER
NEBULIZER
FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
STAR MILLS PAMPANGA 2nd Floor (45) 636-3513
SM MANILA 5th Floor 484-1471
SM MEGAMALL 5th Flr., Bldg. A 635-0436
SM FAIRVIEW Basement 418-7540
SM NORTH EDSA Car Park Plaza 453-3326
CEBU 262-3239
SM SOUTHMALL Basement 802 1565
ROBINSONS GALLERIA Basement 635 5061

I can understand why the two would kill to hold such a gabfest. Roco is a lawyer, for one, which means that he was trained to talk nonstop, preferably before an audience.

Villanueva is what media calls a "brother," which means he is a preacher, also trained to talk nonstop before a big crowd.

Sideburns, unfortunately, did not want to take part in the debate, saying that it was just a waste of time, since none of our problems was ever solved by any debate.

Well, he must have seen through the scheme. Precisely, the debate was designed for him. It was intended to show him off as an incompetent ... well, debater.

***

AND so Gloriaetta also did not want to take part, blaming Sideburns for her decision. If Gloriaetta was not coming, Sen. Panfilo Lacson would also not come.

Of course they claim that such debates actually translate into nice little pieces of government action. Really? Since when?

In the beginning, this cute administration of Gloriaetta took great pains to copy the economic program of the administration of the man named Band ... Wrist Band.

Gloriaetta even spelled out all the legislation she would need to make us all rich in her first Sona, or State of the Nation Address.

It even drew praises from the likes of Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon. Result: this Congress passed a total of ONE economic bill.

***

OF course that was the infamous anti-money laundering bill, which was a watered down version of the legislation the rest of the world wanted.

And so, luckily, today we are still in the world's watchlist of countries that do not want to put in place a foolproof system to fight money laundering.

Moreover, what happened to the plan to change the tax system, including the proposal to change the BIR into a corporate type outfit? I know—NOTHING.

No wonder, without the tax reforms, this cute administration of Gloriaetta, after only four years in power, was able to bury us deeper and deeper in debt.

Aside from the tremendous budget deficit of P200 billion a year, this cute administration managed to incur a lot of "contingent liabilities" in such firms as Napocor.

***

DOWN here in our barangay, "contingent liabilities" simply mean that somebody is trying to hide something ugly.

Such liabilities included, for instance, the subsidy which this cute administration put in electricity rates, just so Gloriaetta could look handsome, *este*, beautiful.

This year alone, thanks to the subsidy, Napocor is facing losses of something like P140 billion, if we are lucky.

That should only add to the mountain of public sector debts. Already, government debts amount to about 75 percent of the entire economy.

An IMF rule of thumb says that, for countries like ours, a good enough level of debt should be 25 percent of the economy, at the most. We are three times over the limit.

***

TOGETHER with the so-called contingent liabilities, our government's total debts may reach as much as 93 percent of the GDP.

That means, taken alongside the size of our economy, our government's debts are among the highest in the world, and definitely the highest in the region.

Next to the Philippines in Asean, in terms of high proportion of public sector debt to the economy, is Indonesia. Yet its debts are only 45 percent of its economy.

This cute administration, of course, would never discuss such things as the budget deficit in the open. It would rather blame the other candidates for its woes.

Of course the solution to the debt problem is economic growth. As the economy grows, the ratio of government debts to GDP goes down.

It becomes a chicken and egg issue: We can't bring up the economy because of the heavy debt load. I agree, we really need some form of debt relief.

***

JUST take a look at the budget. In absolute amount, in terms of pesos, for instance, the budget for education may be increasing, but it does not tell the whole story.

In 1997, the budget for education amounted to P94 billion. Under this cute administration, it went up to an amazing P135 billion last year. Good, huh?

Wait a freaking minute! The way to look at it, if we are to make sense, is to take the education budget alongside the total budget.

BREAKTIME/B3

Isang panawagan
para sa mulat
at matapang
na pagbabantay.
CE98-09485 1

Sali na sa Bantay Balota Brigade. Makiisa sa mga matatapang na estudyante at propesyonal, at magiting na mga mamamayang buong tapang na magbabantay sa boto at kinabukasan ng bayan. Tawag na sa 521-5005 o 521-3826.

BOTO KO, DANGAL KO, IPAGTATANGGOL KO.

Ad space donated by the Philippine Daily Inquirer

AEV unit buying Napocor plant

By Abigail L. Ho

HYDROELECTRIC Development Corp. (Hedcor), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., bested two other companies in last Thursday's auction of the 3.5-megawatt Talomo Hydroelectric Plant.

Its offer to acquire the plant for $1.37 million bested the bids of Eco Tech Industrial Supply Corp. and Harty Inc. Philippines.

Proceeds from the sale would be used to pare down National Power Corp.'s debts, Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said in a statement yesterday.

Reacting to criticism that Napocor's generation assets would not attract enough interest from prospective investors, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the fact that Thursday's bidding was successful would "prove the doomsayers wrong."

"There is great interest in the generation plants of Napocor," she said.

She said the successful auction of the Talomo plant should signal more successful genco sales in the future.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. added that, while the viability of the Napocor gencos had been questioned many times in the past, the three firms that bid for the hydroelectric plant spoke well of the gencos' appeal to the business sector.

The Talomo plant in Tugbok, Davao was the first of the first batch of Napocor generation assets to be auctioned off. To follow next month are the 22-MW Bohol diesel plant and the 1.2-MW Loboc hydroelectric power plant, both in Bohol and to be sold in one lot.

Also to be auctioned off next month are the 2-MW Barit and 0.4-MW Cawayan hydroelectric power plants in Bicol, likewise to be sold as a package.

The government, through the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), has lined up 35 gencos for privatization.

PSALM president Raphael P.M. Lotilla said the successful auction of the Talomo plant placed the government on an "irreversible course towards full privatization of the government's generation assets."

SMC starts exporting poultry products to Japan

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. said it had started exporting poultry products to Japan. This is the company's first direct export to that country.

SMC recently inked a deal with Japanese meat packaging company Yonekyu Corp. for the supply of 28 metric tons of de-boned, cut-up, chicken parts.

Japan has been tapping other Asian suppliers for its poultry requirements, as its traditional suppliers—China and Thailand—were affected by the Avian Flu, also known as bird flu.

SMC said it considered this development as a breakthrough for the poultry industry because the Japanese market was known for its stringent quality standards.

It is the first chicken export from the Philippines to Japan after the bird flu outbreak in Asia.

SMC sold 27.8 metric tons to Japan consisting of two shipments. SMC and Yonekyu are still negotiating for the third shipment of chicken exports.

Yonekyu had expressed its desire to pursue a long-term business relationship with SMC.

Government efforts, through the Department of Agriculture and concerned agencies—National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC) and Bureau of Animal Industry—have likewise been instrumental in the entry of SMC's products to the Japanese market.

SMC and Yonekyu have a common shareholder in Japanese top brewer Kirin Brewery Co. Kirin holds a 15-percent stake in SMC and 20.1 percent in Yonekyu.

Yonekyu is a specialty producer in the processed meat industry in Japan. It earned 111 billion Yen (P51.9 billion) in revenue in 2003. The company has 11 production sites in Japan, two in China and one in the United States.

SMC food manufacturing facilities were the first to be accredited for hazard analysis and critical control point, an international grading system for quality and exports.

Taxpayers warned against late ITR filing

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said it would slap stiff penalties on taxpayers who would fail to file their income tax returns on time.

The BIR said the prompt filing of the returns was a major obligation of the taxpayers.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the BIR would strictly observe the rules governing late filing of ITRs and delayed payment of taxes to improve the habit of taxpayers who take their tax obligations for granted.

"The BIR is doing everything it can to improve revenue collection. But this task should not be shouldered by the BIR alone, but by the whole country," said Parayno during the launching of the Coalition of Tax Advocates (Cota) held in Makati last Thursday.

He urged Cota, composed of business groups and organizations of auditing and accounting practitioners, to encourage its members and others in the business circle to submit their ITRs before the April 15 deadline.

The BIR said taxpayers who would fail to file their ITRs on or before the April 15 deadline would face a penalty equivalent to 25 percent of their taxable income plus 20 percent annual interest.

For those whose income do not reach the minimum taxable income of P100,000 per year, a penalty of P400 for individual taxpayers and P1,000 for corporate taxpayer will be imposed.

Earlier, the BIR likewise warned delinquent taxpayers of facing the full force of the law once caught deliberately evading their tax obligations. The BIR cited the provisions of the Tax Code, which said that any person or entity charged with tax evasion, regardless of the amount, faces an imprisonment of two to four years and a fine ranging from P30,000 to P100,000.

A person who continues to refuse to settle his tax liabilities despite a notice from the BIR, faces imprisonment of one to 10 years, and a fine of P10,000.

The BIR's call for prompt filing of tax returns and payment of tax obligations is part of its efforts to improve revenue collection for the year.

Hard-pressed to help ease the government's huge budget deficit, the BIR is aiming to collect P477 billion this year. The figure is 12 percent higher than its P425.3-billion collection in 2003.

The BIR, which contributes over 80 percent of the government's total revenue, has started implementing new revenue-enhancement measures to keep its positive performance last year and help the government achieve its goal of having a zero deficit by 2009.

Last year's collection of the BIR surpassed its target of P424 billion.

Breaktime

From page B2

In 1997, the education budget was about 20 percent of the total. It showed our priorities as a country. Education, as they say, is the great equalizer.

Today, under this cute administration, the education budget is only 15 percent of the total budget. No wonder, Roco got out of DepEd in a hurry!

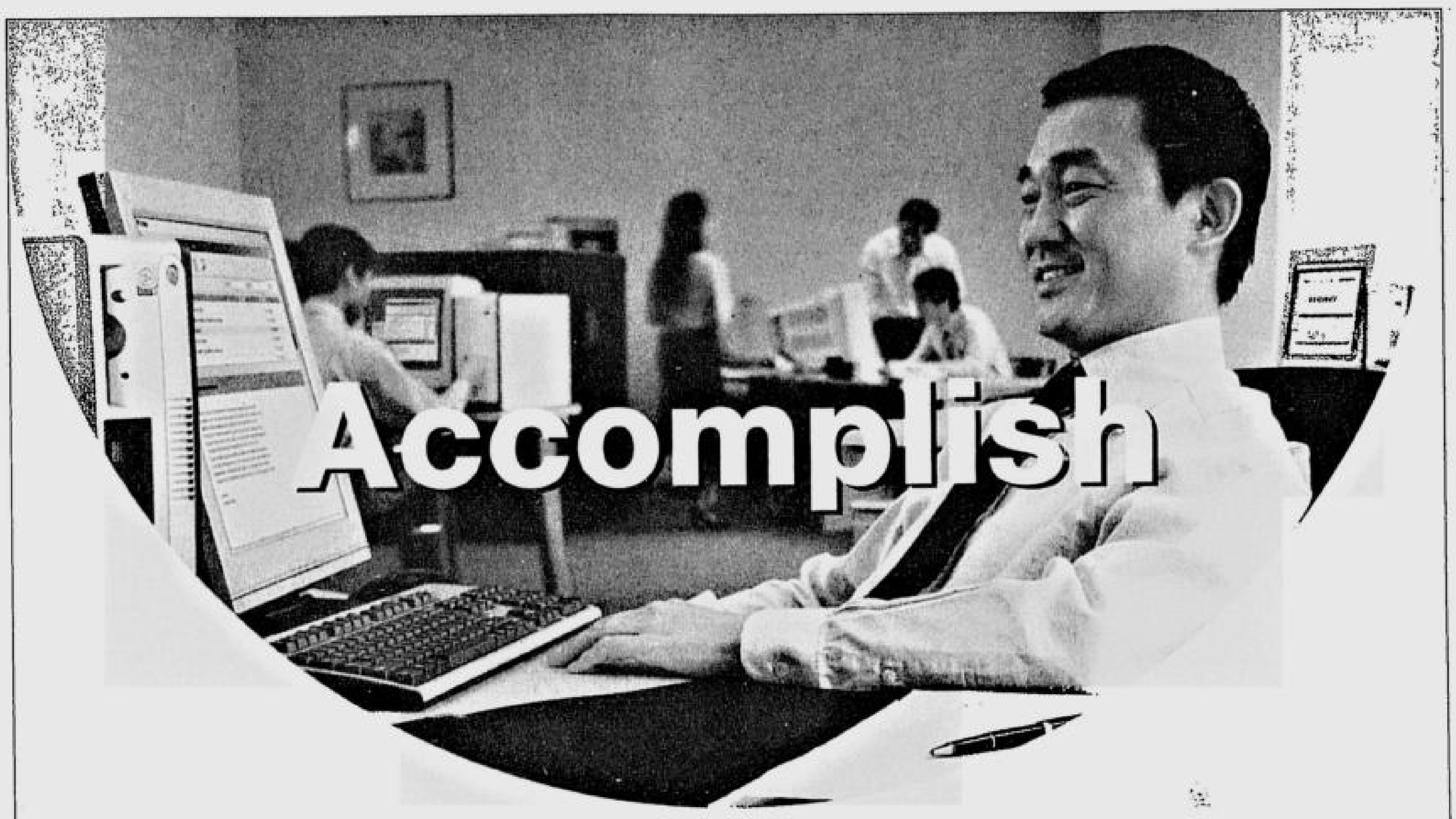
* * *

NOT only that, we are spending less and less of the budget on infrastructure.

As a result, based on the World Competitiveness Yearbook, out of 30 countries in the study, we moved from 18th place when Glori-aetta took over in 2001, to an amazing 22nd last year.

Only three years ago, in terms of infrastructure, Thailand was worse than the Philippines. Thailand overtook us last year. How this cute administration managed to bring us to such a fast decline, must be a work of genius.

In "basic" infrastructure, according to the yearbook ranking of 30 countries, we managed last year to land at No. 30! Wow! Talk about "kitchenomics!"



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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 26, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	382,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	181,600
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	10
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	10,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55	320,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.5	24.5	23.75	24	827,500
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	10,100
Security Bank Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	13,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	25	25	24.5	24.5	48,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1980	2000	1980	2000	1,200
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1440	1455	1440	1455	6,610
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18	18	18	18	105,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	2,170,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	800	785	800	60,400
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	29,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.62	1.64	11,751,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	900	900	900	900	57,700
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	362,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17	17	16.5	16.5	21,900
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	26.5	25	25	1,257,200
Petron Corp.	2.65	2.75	2.65	2.65	675,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.97	1	0.93	0.93	41,460,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	225,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	662,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.44	3,041,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28	28	28	28	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	3,222,600
San Miguel Pure Foods A	42	42	42	42	1,300
Rfm Corp.	0.6	0.64	0.6	0.64	290,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	20,800
San Miguel Corp. B	69.5	69.5	69.5	69.5	13,500
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	2,499,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	1,881,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	78,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	6,600,000
APC Group Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	900,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.49	0.49	7,700,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	300,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	20.25	20.5	19.75	19.75	353,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	20,000
Keppel Holdings	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	150,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1	1.02	780,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	9,240,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	47,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	480,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	40,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	71,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	49,480,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	120,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	550,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.31	0.35	0.31	0.35	780,000
Manila Jockey Club	7	7	7	7	37,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	50,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	5,850,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	- 18	18	17.75	18	338,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	10,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.1	5.1	4.95	4.95	14,587,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.115	0.115	2,250,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.195	400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	1,640,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	90,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	31,992,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.195	.195?	350,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.38	.38?	180,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	8,000,000

Peso closes . . .

From page B1

Although it has always threatened to break past new lows, the peso has so far managed to stay below the historic low of 56.45 to the dollar.

Tetangco yesterday reiterated his call to corporate dollar users to tap the BSP's currency rate protection program (CRPP) to hedge against wild exchange rate swings.

The CRPP facility is a non-deliverable forward contract (NDF) between the BSP and commercial banks with the foreign exchange obligations of bank clients as the underlying transaction.

"Once the contracts mature, they can always roll over," Tetangco said.

DEBT REFINANCING

Ayala seen tapping local mart

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA Corp. may have to tap the local capital market later this year to refinance maturing debts in 2005.

The country's oldest conglomerate is faced with a large $287-million debt that will mature in 2005.

Some $110 million in debts will fall due this year, but Ayala said it could cover this with cash reserves.

Ramon Opulencia, head of treasury for Ayala, said the company has $200 million in cash and about $140 million in committed credit facilities from a syndicate of banks that has remained undrawn.

"From here you could see that 2004 maturities have been taken cared of and as early as now we continue to work on how to refinance the balance for 2005," he said.

Ayala president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II told stockholders that the company has been increasing its exposure to peso-based borrowings.

This allows the company to fund its requirements at a cheaper rate and insulates it from foreign exchange risks.

"We are trying to tap as much as possible the peso facility taking into account that we don't crowd out our subsidiaries who are likewise maximizing the use of the peso market for their own financing," Opulencia said.

He added that if it run short of financing for its remaining maturities, the company might possibly tap the capital markets in the latter part of this year.

Meanwhile, Zobel said the company's loan maturities were "well spread out over the next five years."

"With the excellent credit standing of Ayala in the international financial community, we are also confident that attractive refinancing opportunities remain, should the need arise," Zobel said.

"While our total debt at the parent level is relatively high by our historical standards, our key gearing ratios remain comfortable. It is also important to remember that this debt has allowed Ayala to fund some of our major investments since the mid-90s, directly contributing to their own earnings growth momentum and resulting in a significant amount of value creation," Zobel told stockholders yesterday.

As of end 2003, net debt of the parent company stood at P34.8 billion.

The group also said it would declare a 20-percent stock dividend this year to shareholders as of April 16.

CURRENCIES

March 26, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.824062629	1	56.397
Japan	Yen	0.007764	0.009422	0.5314
United Kingdom	Pound	1.489905	1.808	101.9658
Hongkong	Dollar	0.105687	0.128251	7.233
Switzerland	Franc	0.644	0.781494	44.0739
Canada	Dollar	0.619782	0.752106	42.4165
Singapore	Dollar	0.488044	0.592242	33.4007
Australia	Dollar	0.610462	0.740796	41.7787
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.1859	2.65259	149.5981
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219756	0.266674	15.0396
Brunei	Dollar	0.486603	0.590493	33.302
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.020846	0.025297	1.4267
UAE	Dirham	0.224369	0.272272	15.3553
Euro	Euro	1	1.2135	68.4378
ArgentinaPeso	0.285885	0.346921	19.5653	
Brazil	REAL	0.281154	0.34118	19.2415
Denmark	Kroner	0.134278	0.162946	9.1897
India	Rupee	0.01846	0.022401	1.2633
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216888	0.263193	14.8433
Mexico	New Peso	0.074711	0.090662	5.1131
New Zealand	Dollar	0.533339	0.647207	36.5005
Norway	Kroner	0.11857	0.143885	8.1147
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014419	0.017498	0.9868
South Africa	Rand	0.126115	0.153041	8.6311
Korea	Won	0.000712	0.000864	0.0487
Sweden	Kroner	0.107885	0.130919	7.3834
Syria	Pound	0.018677	0.022665	1.2782
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024888	0.030202	1.7033
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00043	0.000522	0.0294

DISCLOSURES

THE LISTING of the additional 856,724,456 shares of **Filinvest Land Inc.** will be on March 29.

* * *

UNION Bank of the Philippines declared a cash dividend of P0.75 per share. Record date for stockholders entitled to the cash dividends is on April 2 and payment date is on April 30.

* * *

THE PHILODRILL Corp. disclosed the resignation of Julie Ochoa-Lapina as the company's internal auditor effective April 16.

* * *

THE BOARD of **First Philippine Holdings Corp.** set April 16 as the record date for stockholders entitled to vote in the annual stockholders meeting on May 17.

* * *

BASIC Consolidated Inc. announced the resignation of Reynaldo Nograles and Josefina Valera as directors of the company and all its subsidiary companies.

* * *

DIZON Copper-Silver Mines Inc. accepted the resignation of Teodoro Ablang Jr. effective March 31 as executive vice president, compliance officer and board member of the corporation. The board appointed Frederick Matsuda as the new compliance officer of the corporation.

* * *

MANILA Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders meeting on April 19 at 10 a.m. at the Lepanto Building in Makati. Record date is Feb. 18.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Bank of Commerce will increase its authorized capital stock of P3 billion by creating new non-redeemable and non-convertible preferred shares of stock with a par value of P25 per share. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

MWC not keen on acquiring Maynilad

THE AYALA Group is not interested in taking control of Lopez-led Maynilad Water Services Inc. should it be sold again to private investors since it already has its hands full with fixing its own water systems.

Fernando Zobel de Ayala, chair of East Zone operator Manila Water Co. Inc., said at Ayala Corp.'s stockholder's meeting yesterday that since the company has had huge capital expenditure in the past years , it would prefer to concentrate on its own operations.

"It is best for Maynilad to continue on their own way and find their own investors," he said.

He added that to completely bring down the non-revenue water levels further, MWC has to completely replace its water pipes.

Non-revenue water levels stood at 51 percent of total revenues last year, down from 63 percent the previous year.

The Ayala-led water company spent P1.8 billion last year to increase its coverage area and reduce systems losses.

Part of MWC's business expansion strategy in the next few years is to lay out a minimum of 885 kilometers of new pipeline. These will cover areas further east of the concession that include parts of Taguig, Antipolo and other areas in Rizal province.

The company ended 2003 with a total of 515,000 water service connections, 10 percent higher than in 2002.

MWC earned P3.6 billion in revenues in 2003 and a net income of P1.2 billion or double the previous year's level. These were boosted by increased tariff rates and improved billed volumes.

In 1997, the company entered into a concession agreement with the state-led MWSS to supply water to the East Zone service area.

For their part, the Lopezes operate rival water supplier Maynilad, which recently struck a compromise agreement with MWSS. The compromise marked the exit of the Lopez family, also the majority stockholder of Benpres Holdings Corp., from the water distribution business after a long dispute with MWSS. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Jollibee completes purchase of China food company

FAST-FOOD giant Jollibee Foods Corp. said it now controls China's leading fast-food company Yonghe King after making its first payment for its 85-percent stake in that company.

In a disclosure, Jollibee said it paid $11.5 million, prompting the transfer of the 85-percent stake held by Belmont Enterprises Ventures to Jollibee International BVI, a wholly owned subsidiary of Jollibee.

Jollibee agreed to pay $22.5 million for control of the Chinese food company. It has yet to disclose when it will pay the balance of $11 million.

Jollibee International signed early this month a deal to buy 85 percent of Belmont Enterprises Ventures Ltd., the holding company of the Yonghe Group of Companies.

The selling shareholders of Belmont were venture capital fund Baring Asia Private Equity Fund, which will give up 67 percent, and Academy Resources Ltd., led by the founders of Yonghe, which will cede 18 percent of its holdings. Jollibee plans to fund the acquisition using its surplus cash. The company said another option was to fund half of the amount through borrowings.

Officials had said that after China, Jollibee plans to open new stores or acquire food businesses in Indonesia.

Jollibee's net income rose 20.8 percent to P1.26 billion last year from P1.04 billion in 2002. In the fourth quarter, profits grew 27.1 percent to P346 million driven by strong sales and cost savings. *Elizabeth Sanchez*

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has issued **SARO No. B-03-03019** to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) with an indicated amount of Php 5.1 million to cover the requirements for the Waterproofing Project of the TESDA Administration Building in Taguig, Metro Manila.

Following the Failure of Bidding last November 2003, the TESDA Central Office Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) amended certain conditions / provisions of the bid documents. In particular, TESDA opted to utilize / apply a urethane elastic / solvent-based waterproofing material to the 6,197 square meter area covered by the project.

All construction / waterproofing companies interested to be pre-qualified must submit a Letter of Intent together with the following eligibility documents on or before **06 April 2004:**

1. Mayor's Permit, Municipal License
2. DTI/SEC Registration
3. BIR Certificate of Registration
4. CIAP certificate that the company is not "Black Listed"
5. Valid PCAB License with Waterproofing Specialty
6. Accreditation / Certification from a manufacturer / distributor that the company is a qualified or authorized applicator of their waterproofing material / product.
7. Lists of clients / contracts in waterproofing projects for the last three (3) years
8. Audited Financial Statement stamped / received by BIR for the last three (3) years
9. Notarized affidavit certifying under oath that the documents/information submitted are correct and copied from an original copy.

Result of the pre-qualification evaluation shall be known by **April 16, 2004.** A pre-bid conference shall be held at the Office of the BAC Chairman on **April 23, 2004** to discuss and agree the terms and conditions of the bidding.

Companies who already qualified and bought / participated in the past Invitation to Bid of this project shall no longer pay the new bid documents to be issued.

For particulars, please contact the BAC Secretariat / PSD at telephone number **893-82-96 or 817-40-76 local 313.**

Approved by:
(Sgd.) ALCESTIS M. GUIANG
Director General

(PDI - March 27, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-019

PD Ref No.: P-03-0932 / PR No.: NCCP-03-003328

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders / contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of Supply, Installation & Test of Fire Protection for NCC Building
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of Supply, Installation and testing of the Fire Pumping System, Outdoor/Indoor Water hydrant System, piping System, Portable Fire Extinguisher, Automatic Water Sprinkler System, Total Gas Flooding Fire Protection System and Fire Alarm System.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is P13,033,316.00 to be sourced from Internal Cash Generation (ICG).
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting March 26 to April 26, 2004 at The BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on April 15, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before 2:00 p.m. of April 27, 2004 at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. cor. BIR Rd., Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - March 27 & April 7, 2004)

PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) is inviting bidders for:

DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget	Bidding Fee
Laundry Services	P 3.92 million	P 5,420.00
Dishwashing Machine	1.5 million	3,000.00

Source of Funding: PHC FUNDS

The list of eligibility requirements will be issued at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, Purchasing Division, Basement of MAB, PHC, East Avenue, Quezon City. Only eligible bidders shall be required to pay the non-refundable bidding fee. The deadline for the submission of requirements is on **April 16, 2004** not later than 4:00 p.m. For any inquiry, please call Purchasing Division at tel. no. 922-0574 ask for Ms. Noemi Nocasa.

The PHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids or declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract, if there is evidence of collusion between relevant public officers or employees of the PHC and any of the bidders, or among the bidders, or between bidders and third parties, including any act which restricts, suppresses or nullifies competition, or if the BAC is found to have failed to follow the prescribed bidding procedures. The agency also reserves the right to waive any formality on the bids received, provided that such waiver does not refer to a major deviation in a bid or any requirement provided for in the **Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184** pertaining to the substance of the bid. Should such review uncover any misrepresentation made in the eligibility statement, or any changes in the situation of the bidder materially downgrade the substance of such statements, the PHC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by it in the preparation of its bids.

(Sgd.) RAUL D. JARA, M.D.
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - March 20, 21, 27 & 28, 2004)

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  V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
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CAVITE

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ST. CHARBEL DASMA LA 371m² P2,650/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of PELAGIA S. VIRAY was extrajudicially settled among heirs before Notary Public Danilo Leyble Rizal Chap. per Doc#441 Page#89 Book#133 Series of 2004 (PDI-March 13, 20 & 27, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given of loss S2 ID No. 1321896 in the name of Dr. Nerio C. Zabala, lost last Feb. 24, 2004.
PDI - March 27, 2004

Please take notice that Stock Certificate No. A-7379 of Ayala Corporation in the name of Socorro Singson y Roxas covering 18,164 shares of stock has been reported lost.

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ERRATUM

In the ad of the **Department of Social Welfare and Development**, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City, published in this paper **March 21, 2004** Re: Invitation to Bid, Sale of a Portion of the Wellareville Property, Bid Documents/TOR shall be obtained from Ms. Ma. Suzette M. Agcaoili. Her name was inadvertently spelled as M.A. Caoili.

Our Apologies

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PACIFIC CENTER BUILDING, SAN MIGUEL AVENUE
ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG CITY

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE RECOVERY OF FUEL AND INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCER COSTS UNDER THE GENERATION RATE ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (GRAM)

ERC CASE NO. 2004-______

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC) and POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PSALM),

Applicants.

x---x

APPLICATION

Applicants **NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION ("NPC") and POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION ("PSALM")**, through the undersigned counsels and to this Honorable Commission, most respectfully state:

1. NPC is a government-owned and controlled corporation created and existing under and by virtue of Republic Act No. 6395, as amended, with principal office address at NPC-Office Building Complex, corner Quezon Avenue and BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
2. PSALM is a government-owned and controlled corporation, created and existing by virtue of Republic Act No. 9136 or the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" ("R.A. no. 9136"), with principal office address at 2/F SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
3. This Application is a joint filing between NPC and PSALM. Applicant NPC is filing this Application in its capacity as owner of record of all existing generation assets and energy, and as the implementing agency for the unbundled generation rates approved by the Honorable Commission in its Orders dated September 6, 2002, May 15, 2003 and January 26, 2004 under ERC Case Nos. 2001-901, 2003-156 and 2003-574, respectively. Applicant PSALM is filing this Application in its capacity as administrator of applicant NPC's generation assets and the transferee and owner of these assets pursuant to Section 49 of R.A. No. 9136.
4. In the Order dated February 24, 2003, the Honorable Commission issued and adopted the Implementing Rules for the Generation Rate Adjustment Mechanism (GRAM) and the Incremental Currency Exchange Rate Adjustments (ICERA) providing, among others, the required mechanisms for the recovery of the deferred Fuel and Independent Power Producer (IPP) Costs.
5. This Application covers the test period October to December 2003. For this filing, applicant NPC has complied with the GRAM's monthly reporting requirements as evidenced by the receipt of the Honorable Commission of the submitted reports/ compliances for October, November, and December 2003, hereto attached as **Annex "A" and series**.
6. In this Application, only the recalculated difference between the allowable and billed fueld and purchased power costs for the period October 2003 to December 2003 is proposed to be recovered through Deferred Accounting Adjustment (DAA).
7. The Applicants did not include in the DAA the difference of the actual Purchase Power Cost Adjustment (PPCA) and the P0.40 per kWh PPCA cap set by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo consistent with the Honorable Commission's Order dated January 14, 2004. However, applicants manifest their intention to recover the said difference should sufficient evidence be shown that the said cap is already lifted.
8. Pending the resolution of the Application for the Approval of the Gas Supply Purchase Agreement (GSPA) under ERC Case No. 2004-52 filed by the applicants, the cost of natural gas is also excluded in this filing. Applicants, however, reserve their right to recover the cumulative natural gas cost once the GSPA is approved by the Honorable Commission.
9. Moreover, consistent with the Order dated January 14, 2004, applicants utilized the lower of the approved or actual heat rate levels in the determination of the allowable fuel costs. Pursuant to the Honorable Commission's Orders dated May 15, 2003 and January 26, 2004, applicants are preparing the Application for the new heat rate and heating values level.
10. Considering the foregoing and pursuant to the Implementing Rules of the GRAM, applicants have developed their proposed revised Generation Rate Schedule for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao Grids that shall allow them to recover the following deferred fuel and purchased power costs and the corresponding carrying charges:

TOTAL DAA COMPONENT OF GENERATION CHARGE, in Pesos
TOTAL CURRENT UNDER/(OVER) RECOVERIES (computed less billed)

	LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO	PHILS.
Covering October-December 2003	1,560,793,488	509,045,662	516,616,018	2,586,455,167
Total Carrying Charges	23,670,643	7,634,570	7,698,578	39,003,791
TOTAL	1,584,464,121	516,680,231	524,314,596	2,625,458,958

Carrying Charge rate:	October 2003	November 2003	December 2003
91-day Treasury Bills	5.249%	6.000%	6.000%
Allowance under. GRAM guidelines	3.000%	3.000%	3.000%
Total Rate Utilized	8.249%	9.000%	9.000%

In support of the amounts comprising the DAA, attached hereto are the various computations and information on the following:

Current over/under recoveries on fuel and purchased power costs and carrying charge	**Annex "B" & series**
91-day Treasury Bills Rate	**Annex "C"**
Actual energy sales from August 2003 to December 2003	**Annex "D"**
Net generation and Generation Mix covering October to December 2003	**Annex "E"**

11. Applicants NPC and PSALM propose to recover the above-stated DAA over a three-month period in the Luzon grid and over a six-month period in the Visayas and Mindanao grids, which is in accordance with the allowable recovery period in the Implementing Rules of the GRAM. It is also the applicants understanding that the balance of the approved DAA in the Honorable Commission's January 26,2004 order shall continue to be recovered in addition to the DAA in this application until such time that the total approved DAA is fully recovered.
12. The Projected Energy Sales (in kWh) used in the NPC's CY2003 Budget Exercise was utilized as basis for recovery of the above-stated DAA components and is hereto attached as **Annex "F"**.
13. The proposed revised generation rates was reviewed and approved by the National Power Board in its Resolution No. 2004-25 dated March 10, 2004, photocopy of which is attached hereto as **Annex "G"**. It was also approved by the PSALM Board in Resolution No. 2004-______ dated March ______, 2004, a certified true copy of which is attached hereto and made an integral part hereof as **Annex "H"**.
14. The components of the revised Generation Rates are attached as **Annex "I" and series**. The following table is the proposed Revised Generation Rate Schedule:

Rate Component	LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO
Generation Charge, P/kWh	2.4786	2.9749	1.5115
Franchise & Benefits to Host Communities Charge, P/kWh	0.0245	0.0177	0.0282

15. Applicants respectfully submit that the Honorable Commission immediately authorize the recovery of the accumulated deferred charges of P2.6 Billion covering the test period October to December 2003 to augment herein applicant NPC's financial condition.
16. It should also be noted that applicants excluded the Net Fuel and Purchased Power Cost Adjustment (FPCA) Collection of P0.31 per kWh approved by the Honorable Commission in the Orders dated May 15, 2003 and January 26, 2004 but which shall be continuously imposed by applicant NPC particularly in the Visayas grid until July 2004 billing month or untill the revised six (6) month recovery period has been satisfied.
17. The proposed Revised Generation Rate Schedule is just, fair and reasonable as it allows the recovery of just deferred costs incurred consistent with the principles of free and competitive electricity market as provided under R.A. No. 9136, and ultimately will redound to the best interest and benefit of the consuming public.
18. Pursuant to Section 4 (e) of Rule 3 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. No. 9136, attached hereto are the following jurisdictional requirements:
    a. Certification issued by the City Secretary of the Sangguniang Panglunsod of Quezon City as **Annex "J"**;
    b. Certification issued by the City Secretary of the Sangguniang Panglunsod of the City of Makati as **Annex "K"**;
    c. Two copies of the Application as published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star, newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, as **Annexes "L"** and **"M"**, respectively.

WHEREFORE, it is most respectfully prayed of the Honorable Commission that the proposed Revised Generation Rates of P2.4786/kWh for the Luzon Grid for three (3) months and P2.9749/kWh and P1.5115/kWh for the Visayas and Mindanao grids, respectively, for six (6) months be **APPROVED**.

Other reliefs just and equitable under the premises are likewise prayed for.

Quezon City for Pasig City, March 26, 2004.

FOR APPLICANT NPC
FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL:

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Special Attorney-OSG
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PTR No. 50044162/01.08.04/Q.C.
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Department Manager
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP Lifetime No. 594567/01.17.03/Q.C.
Roll No. 24988

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IBP Lifetime No. 01748/Ilocos Sur
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Roll No. 44910

Counsels for NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
NPC Office Building Complex, Quezon Avenue
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FOR APPLICANT PSALM

FOR THE GOVERNMENT CORPORATE COUNSEL:

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(Sgd.) MARIA BELEN P. MONTES-NERA
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Roll No. 37737
Counsel for Applicant POWER SECTOR ASETS and LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
2nd Floor, SGV II Building
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

(PDI - March 27, 2004)

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OBITUARIES

AMBROSIO "AMY" RIPARIP, JR.

Passed away last March 23, 2004
at the age of 58.

His remains lie in state at Chapels 3 & 4 of the Loyola Memorial Chapels, A. Bonifacio Avenue, Tanong, Marikina City.

He is survived by his wife Jet; and children **Tracy** & **Boyet**, **Mia** & **Danboy** and **ARIII**; father **Ambrosio Sr.**; brothers and sisters **Chit**, **Carm**, **Norma**, **Marc**, **Robert** and **Roland**; and grandchildren.

There will be a service in his memory on Friday, March 26th, at 7:30 p.m. Interment will be on Saturday, March 27, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. after the Holy Mass at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

PERGENTINO HIZON SANDICO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 25, 2004 at the age of 87.

His late wife	: **Pilar Monroy Sandico (†)**
Children	: **Pilar & Oscar Senar, Lourdes (†) & Antonio Siojo, Henedina & Henry Geronimo, Antonio & Ana Marie Hipolito**
Grandchildren	: **Racquel & John Philip Carreon, Richard Senar, Ma. Patricia Siojo, Mark Paul Siojo, Ernesto Antonio Sandico, Ma. Antonette Sandico, Angeline Marie Sandico, Luis Antonio Sandico, Ana Lauren Sandico**
Great Grandchildren	: **Rosanne Denise Carreon, Christine Danielle Carreon, Isabel Dominique Carreon**
Brothers & Sisters	: **Mayorico & Jane Garcia, Benito Sandico (†), Sis. Mary Caridad (Pink Sisters), Luz (†) & Francisco Lagman, Fernando & Corazon Rosario, Orosia & Ignacio Ramos Sr., Donatila & Rodolfo Leveriza**
Sisters-in-law	: **Gloria P. Monroy, Teresita P. Monroy, Victoria M. Rangel**

Nephews and nieces request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. On Monday, March 29, 2004, after the 10:00 a.m. Mass, his remains will be transferred to La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City for cremation.

PAULINA ASPE MONASTERIO

of Libmanan, Naga City and San Jose, Camarines Sur

Peacefully joined her Creator, her loving husband ***Mariano Sr.****, daughter* ***Editha****,*
son ***Mariano Jr.*** *& children-in-law* ***Romy Banares,***
Leni Razon *&* ***Cathy Idviqual***
on 25 March 2004 at the age of 91.

Her loving children and in-laws: **Monina & Angel Parazo, Danilo & Gladys, Al Pulido, Mila & Joven Banares, Sam & Christy, Celeste & Al Shaheen, VJ & Zeny, Vel & Jesse Mcloy, Chito & Nina, Donn & Lorie, Amor** & **Jorge Bondad, Tino & Emma**; grandchildren, great grandchildren & relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest & everlasting happiness.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be announced later.

DEATH NOTICES

JOSE V. BELLEZA
of Goa, Camarines Sur

Peacefully joined our Creator on
March 25, 2004.
His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz,
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
Cremation rites will be announced later.

PACIFICO SALDE CABA
Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on Wednesday, March 24, 2004 at the age of 64.
His remains lie in state at his family
residence at 209 Ermin Garcia St.,
Cubao, Quezon City.
Interment to be announced later.

In Memory of our Mama

Consolacion Cleto Ventura

She is lovingly remembered on her 2nd death anniversary today, March 27, 2004 by her children **Jean** and **Ed**, **Jocelyn**, **Janet**, **Jonathan** and **Melissa** and grandchildren.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6

CLASSIFIEDS

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Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Office of the Ombudsman is inviting all interested and legitimate contractors to apply for eligibility and submit bid proposals for the Supply and Delivery of 65 units Personal Computer (Branded), Intel Pentium 4 with licensed softwares and other peripherals, 2 units Notebook/Laptop Computer and 2 units inkjet Printer, with an approved budget of **FOUR MILLION FOUR HUNDRED FORTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P4,445,000.00)**. The source of fund for this expense shall be taken from the Continuing Appropriation for Capital Outlays of the Office of the Ombudsman.

All interested parties are invited to send their eligibility requirements/documents and procure the Bidding Documents from the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Office of the Ombudsman Bldg., Agham Road, North Triangle, Quezon City c/o Mr. Reme S. Feliza, BAC Secretary, Tel. No. 926-9032 local 221, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).

Listed hereunder are the required eligibility requirements/documents (whichever are applicable for single proprietorship/partnership or corporation) to be submitted in a certified true copy by the issuing agency:

I. CLASS "A" DOCUMENTS

A. LEGAL

1. SEC/DTI Registration;
2. Articles of Incorporation;
3. Valid & Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License;
4. VAT Registration and TIN of Taxpayer;
5. Income Tax Return for the Preceding Calendar Year;
6. Statement of Prospective Bidder that it is not "blacklisted"/barred from bidding by the government/any of its agencies, offices, corporation/local government units;
7. List of Clients;
8. Company Profile;
9. Authority of company representative.

B. TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

Statement of the prospective bidder of all its ongoing and completed government and private contracts within the period specified in the invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid including the contracts awarded but not yet started. Statement should include:

a) Name and location of the Contract/s;
b) Date of contract/s;
c) Kinds of good sold.
d) Amount of Contract and Value of Outstanding Contracts;
e) Date of delivery
f) End-user's acceptance if completed;
g) Specification whether the prospective bidder is a manufacturer, supplier/distributor.

C. FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

1) The prospective bidder's latest audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities;
2) The prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be in accordance with section 23.11 of the IRR-A; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate, in an amount not lower than that set by the procuring entity in the Bidding Documents, which shall be at least equal to ten percent (10%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

II. CLASS "B" DOCUMENTS

1) Valid joint venture agreement, in case of a joint venture; and
2) Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative/s to verify any or all of the documents submitted for the eligibility check.

BAC shall use a "pass/fail" criteria to determine the eligibility of prospective bidders. As such, non-submission of the requested eligibility requirements will result in the disqualification of prospective bidders.

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES

1.	Pre-bid Conference	-	05 April 2004 @ 10:00 a.m. BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
2	Issuance of Bid and Eligibility Documents	-	06 April 2004 BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
3	Deadline of submission of Eligibility Documents & Bids	-	20 April 2004 @ 10:00 a.m. BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
4.	Opening of Bids	-	20 April 2004 @ 10:30 a.m. BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C

The Office of the Ombudsman reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any defect or informality, and assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnity to the bidders for any expenses that they may incur in the preparation of bids and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government. Any questions arising from the herein compliance shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO M. NOCOS**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 27, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: sssemail@info.com.ph • Web site http://www.sss.gov.ph

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
1)	Gimelita Noga Frances & Jusfer Abadilla	131 West Cabulusan, Cupang, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila	Simplicio Abadilla SS # 06-0566572-7	November 7, 2003
2)	Virginia G. Bandianon	Unknown	Mario Edwin Y. Bandianon SS # 03-3545877-0	December 27, 2003
3)	Florencia G. Villacora	110-A San Gabriel St., Buhangin, Davao City	James E. Canete SS # 06-0364949-9	November 22, 2003
4)	Juanita Benico, Lorena, Laureano Jr., Eleonor, Leonora Lilian, Lalaine & Marilyn	Palcarangan, Sta. Cruz, Lubao, Pampanga	Laureano Dela Cruz SS # 03-4244736-3 03-1430372-3	February 7, 2001
5)	Siong Tok Chua	Unknown	Adela P. Deocareza SS # 03-0129211-9	May 31, 2003
6)	Pelagia Permison	Unknown	Rufino Domingo SS # 03-4686444-7	January 4, 2004
7)	Agrifina Quizmondo	Unknown	Jose A. Dumo SS # 03-3530207-5	January 28, 2004
8)	Chito B. Enriquez	Dalandanan, Valenzuela	Benjamin G. Enriquez SS # 03-0519386-1	April 8, 2003
9)	Florencia Estrera	Unknown	Francisco J. Estrera SS # 06-0421145-7	November 25, 2003
10)	Elvina Valdez / Elbina Valdez	Camiling, Tarlac	Ricardo Ferrer SS # 02-0108516-7	January 9, 2004
11)	Alicia Garrote	Landayan, San Pedro, Laguna	Antonio Garrote SS # 03-2321084-9	October 2, 2001
12)	Felicisima T. Iman	Unknown	Benito M. Iman SS # 06-0491454-7	January 9, 2004
13)	Adoracion A. Abad Jalandoni	22 South 19th Roxas Homesite, Quezon City	Fidel F. Jalandoni, Jr. SS # 03-0772842-5	February 8, 2004
14)	Avelina Estrada	Pag-asa Kapalong, Davao Del Norte	Felix A. Laguna SS # 09-0726818-1	April 21, 2003
15)	Aranda Ligan	Unknown	Rodrigo Legan SS # 07-0354526-0	July 31, 2003
16)	Consuelo Pineda	Unknown	Salustiano Mondido SS # 07-0514536-7	May 13, 2002
17)	Purisima Caycido Nacor	Marcelo St., Maysan, Valenzuela, M.M.	Salvador Q. Nacor SS # 33-3881777-1	December 15, 2003
18)	Brigida Pacana	San Andres, Manila	Igberto G. Pacana SS # 03-1536862-8	October 23, 2003
19)	Praxedes C. Papasin	Unknown	Quiliopas C. Papasin SS # 09-0488827-6	November 9, 2003
20)	Milagros Alarcon Ederlina B. Pascual	517 Barcelona St., Binondo, Manila 484 Madrid St., Binondo, Manila	Carlos A. Pascual SS # 03-0804671-1	October 16, 2003
21)	Euligio Pelino	Unknown	Francisco R. Pelino SS # 03-7570970-6	September 9, 2003
22)	Feliza Agostin/Perla; Rosalem Penado	Unknown	Diosdado Porlas SS # 03-5137216-0	January 26, 2004
23)	Rolando Puro, Sr.	Unknown	Victoria Puro SS # 07-1584075-9	January 12, 2004
24)	Luz Garlando	Masikap Street, Pateros, M.M.	Artemio Q. Ramirez, Jr. SS # 33-1933969-2	January 29, 2004
25)	Romy Requilman	Unknown	Rommel M. Requilman SS # 03-9831897-0	September 5, 2003
26)	Marinarita Mendoza Normalita Mendoza	Ormoc City	Tiburcio Reynes SS # 06-0435025-3	September 18, 2003
27)	Josephine Salinas	1-Eleven St., New Manila, Q.C.	Romeo O. Salinas SS # 03-7861124-4	March 28, 1993
28)	Purificacion Almonte & Children	Unknown	Antonio A. Santiago SS # 04-0289707-3	November 8, 2003
29)	Bibiana Bido	740 Palawan St., Sampaloc, Manila	Melchor G. Santillana SS # 03-5047884-5	January 11, 2004
30)	Susanne Mella	Unknown	Larry Tiongko SS # 03-0994619-5	October 2, 2002

(PDI - March 27, 2004)

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National Power Corporation

March 18, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Power Corporation (NPC) of the Republic of the Philippines invites all interested contractors to register and apply for eligibility and to bid for the Erection and Stringing of Puerto Princesa - Roxas 138 kV Single Circuit Steel Tower Transmission Lines Project in Four (4) Schedules.

The works to be completed by the successful bidder shall consist of, but not limited to, construction of tower foundations, erecting and dressing of different types of tower structures including fabrication of lacking tower parts, installation and stringing of conductors and overhead ground wires, slope protection works and all other works necessary to complete the project.

The complete set of eligibility documents are available for issuance at the Bids and Contracts Services Department, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104 with Tel/Fax No. 922-1622, upon presentation of Letter of Intent and current Contractor's License.

Thg Bidding requirements and schedule of activities are as follows:

CONTRACT NUMBER - LP05A006SI	
APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT Schedule I - P56,294,100.00 Schedule III - P59,058,636.00	Schedule II - P60,432,340.00 Schedule IV - P63,895,245.00
Contractor's License and Registration Particulars Issued By the PCAB	For Schedules I, II, III & IV License - Category AAA - Electrical Works Registration - Large B - Electrical Works
Issuance of Eligibility Documents	March 22 - April 14, 2004
Deadline for submission of Eligibility Requirements/Documents	April 14, 2004
Issuance of Tender Documents	April 28, 2004
Pre-bid Conference	May 14, 2004
Submission and Opening of Bids	May 28, 2004
Contract Duration	Three Hundred (300) calendar days per schedule
Cost of Eligibility Documents	P1,000.00 (Non-refundable)
Cost of Tender/Bid Documents	P5,000.00 (Non-refundable)

Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be evaluated based on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria prescribed in the eligibility documents. Tender/bid documents shall be issued only to eligible bidders.

The Contracts Award Committee (CAC), NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s) or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) of the ground(s) for NPC's action.

(Sgd.) **SILVANO C. ZANORIA**
SVP, ME & TMS and
Chairman, Contracts Award Committee

(PDI - March 27, 2004)

SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang
Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

5 planets line up in rare celestial display

By Charles E. Buban

EVER wonder why the early evening sky is now filled with five conspicuously bright "stars" that appear to line up in the western horizon?

It's because these "stars" are actually planets lining up in a rare celestial display that won't be seen again until 2040.

Right now, just after sunset, you can spot Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Jupiter—the five planets that can be visible to the naked eye—in a line stretching upward from the western horizon all the way to the east.

Celestial coincidence

"It's an unusual and wonderful sight but of course it would be even great to view them through a telescope where one can see the phases of Venus, Saturn's rings and Jupiter's cloud belts and its largest moon," says James Kevin Ty, Astronomical League of the Philippines president.

Ty, an amateur astronomer, stresses that there is no astronomical significance to this rare alignment.

"This celestial coincidence just happens as planets travel around the sun in almost the same plane, at different distances from the sun and at different speeds," says Ty.

Similar alignments occur every 20 years or so, although they are not usually as close together or as visible to the naked eye (they may be too close to the sun that they are washed out by its glare).

A much closer alignment will occur in 2040, according to Ty.

Spotting the planets

"Planets do not twinkle the way stars do. In fact, this is a good way of figuring out if a particular object you see in the sky is a planet or a star. Planets like Venus and Jupiter are unusually bright compared to the stars," says Ty.

From your backyard, you can find the planets on your own. Each of the planets will be bright enough to be seen under most urban lighting conditions.

"Mercury will hover above the setting sun in the west. Higher up, Venus is bright and in fact, will be the first thing you will notice when you go outside," says Ty.

Mars, much dimmer than it was last year, is high in the southwestern sky while the yellowish Saturn is nearly overhead.

The first quarter moon will hover between these two planets but won't cause too much glare to obstruct observation.

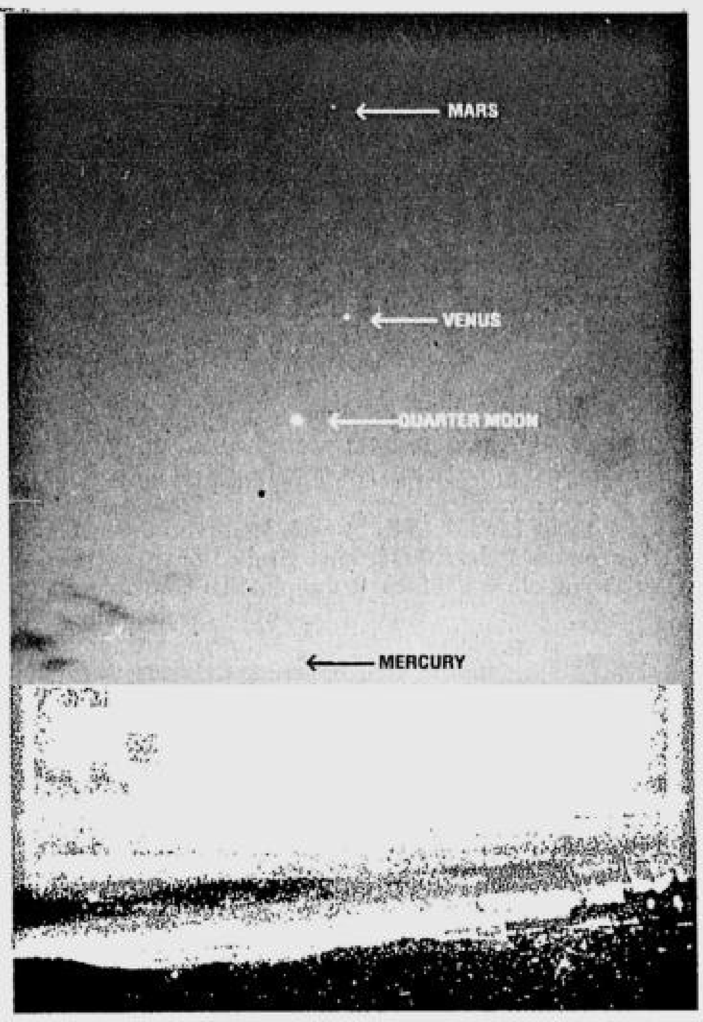
"Jupiter will be stunningly bright and will dominate the eastern evening sky, rising just as the Sun goes down," says Ty.

Best is yet to come

Ty says that by May, the five planets will cluster in a tight group.

"Imagine this: Jupiter will be high and bright in the sky and below it, Venus will be paired with the crescent moon. Mars will lie below it, and Saturn below it. Farther down and to the right, Mercury will hug the horizon. It will be a spectacular sight," says Ty.

He, however, reminds observers not to point their telescopes directly toward the setting sun as this may fry their eyes and spoil their observation.



PLANETARY PARADE. Mars, Venus and Mercury line up in the western horizon. Saturn and Jupiter (not shown) are located farther up the sky. Photo was taken at the Manila Bay. JAMES KEVIN TY

Filipino Nasa physicist warns of global warming

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

IN THE LATTER half of 2003, a series of news clips on global warming appeared around the world, including in the foreign news section of this paper. I was disappointed to note that no one bothered to find out that the lead researcher, Dr. Josefino Comiso, is a Filipino. (I featured Joey and his work extensively in my book "Ten Outstanding Filipino Scientists." Call Lorie or Bong at Anvil sales at 637-3621, 637-5141 or e-mail them at anvilsales@eudoramail.com to order a copy.)

Since the international news reports appeared, Joey and his team at the Nasa Goddard Space Flight Center have been busily finding still more evidence for global warming in the Arctic.

Why the Arctic? In Joey's words, "the effects are amplified here."

Ice and global warming

Why? A Nasa article expounds: "The reasons climate changes get amplified in the Arctic are many and complex, but one of the main features concerns the ice itself. Ice reflects the sun's rays up into the atmosphere and out to space, which keeps solar radiation from warming the Arctic lands and ocean. Both sea ice, which floats on water, and glaciers and ice on land cool the Earth in this manner.

"Without large ice masses at the poles, the Earth would absorb more heat and warming would escalate. When ocean temperature rises, sea ice becomes thinner, exposing more water, thus reinforcing the warming trend and creating a positive feedback loop."

Again: "Bright white ice reflects sunlight from the Earth's surface. In contrast, open water is very dark, and absorbs sunlight. As sea ice melts more water is exposed, which tends to increase warming."

Sea ice melting by 9%

So what exactly did Joey find? Sea ice that remains all year long (even under the onslaught of an Arctic summer) is called perennial sea ice. In 2002, after multiple measurements, Joey and his team realized that perennial sea ice was melting. What's more, it is literally melting inch by rapid inch, by a whopping 9 percent (more than 2.5 degrees Celsius) per decade!

In an article published in the Journal of Climate of the American Meteorological Society, Joey revealed—through detailed surface temperature satellite data shown in graphs, maps and charts—that most areas of the Arctic significantly became warmer in the 1990s (compared to as early as the 1980s).

He also stated that the time that sea ice melts (usually between early spring to late fall) has become longer and warmer, leading to a disastrous warming cycle. Also, the places within North America are hotter than other Arctic areas.

Butterfly effect

But the Arctic is far away, and these changes shouldn't really affect us, should they? Unfortunately, these changes indicate all the more that upheavals in our climate are already under way.

Remember the butterfly effect? Climate is a chaotic phenomenon, and in this case, not only the flap of a butterfly's wings, but the melting of sea ice itself, can affect global weather.

"Researchers suspect that loss of Arctic sea ice may be caused partly by global warming and partly by changing atmospheric pressure and wind patterns over the Arctic that move sea ice around, which also help to warm Arctic temperatures," Nasa intones. "Changes in air pressure and wind patterns may likewise be a result of greenhouse gas buildup in the atmosphere."

A warm-blooded Pinoy in the Arctic cold? For Dr. Joey Comiso, global warming is not just an academic platitude.

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Works almost everywhere

(First of two parts)

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

DESPITE all the questions about its legality, morality and ethics, it is still believed that the answer to most medical problems lies in stem cell research.

Need a new organ? Use your own stem cells to grow an exact genetic match for the one you need replaced. There are parents out there who ask that a portion of their baby's umbilical cord, which is teeming with stem cells, be cryogenically stored for future use if their child ever has a medical emergency.

Paralyzed? Stem cell therapy can regenerate the damaged nerves and let you walk again. Diabetic? Stem cell therapy could allow the body to produce insulin.

A world without sickness or disability. It almost sounds too good to be true.

Previous research

And maybe it is. From the University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine and the Wells Center for Pediatric Research at Indiana University comes a study whose findings have been backed by independent researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

Both papers, recently published on the website of Nature, suggest that maybe stem cells can't be everything after all. Both studies run counter to research published three years ago by Dr. Donald Orlic of the National Human Genome Research Institute that says stem cells can help repair damaged hearts.

As Orlic's research is the basis for clinical trials currently under way, it should be noted that the researchers began by trying to reproduce the exact conditions of the original experiments to obtain the same results.

Stem cells injected in mice

Led by Dr. Charles Murry, a UW associate professor of pathology, researchers first obtained hematopoietic (hematopoiesis is the formation of blood cells in the body) stem cells by extracting them from the adult bone marrow of transgenic mice which had been genetically engineered to ease the process of tracking the HSCs.

In one experiment, the HSCs were injected into the walls of the hearts of healthy mice and into another group that had suffered heart attacks. After a month, the mice were killed and their hearts stained and studied.

According to Orlic, within two weeks of injecting HSCs into the heart, the stem cells were transformed into cells within and surrounding the heart and were repairing the damage caused by heart attacks. If the HSCs had started rebuilding the heart, the nuclei of the stem cells, when viewed under a microscope, would glow bright blue around the damaged area of the heart.

But Murry et al. saw no such color, indicating that the stem cells had not repaired the damaged hearts. The experiment was repeated with a similar strain of mice, and the nuclei were stained to glow a bright green. Again, no stem cells were found to have transformed into heart cells.

Bone marrow cells

Over at Stanford, researchers led by Dr. Robert Robbins, associate professor of cardiothoracic surgery, also attempted to reproduce Orlic's results with HSCs from adult bone marrow.

Robbins et al. modified the protocol, however, and separated the HSCs into purified subsets, injecting three different kinds (called populations) of these purified stem cells into the hearts of mice that were healthy and mice that had suffered heart attacks.

They, too, could not find evidence that the HSCs had transformed into heart muscle cells. However, another experiment suggested that after six weeks, one kind of adult BM cells stayed in the heart and seemed to work with the cells in the area to form new blood vessels, possibly for the blood to get to the heart without straining the damaged area.

So what do the results of these studies mean? As Dr. Murry said in a press release issued by UW, "[Orlic's] work is simply not reproducible."

His words are echoed by Leora Balsam, a member of Dr. Robbins' team. In the press release issued by Stanford, Dr. Balsam almost apologetically says that they "started out attempting to validate and extend [Orlic's] findings."

Instead they raised questions about the validity of Dr. Orlic's work. "We're all interested in finding ways of regenerating the heart," Balsam concluded. "I think what this study points out is that it's not easy."

New microbes could become 'new norm' in diseases

ATLANTA—They have become household names: SARS, avian influenza, monkeypox and anthrax.

But in the not-so-distant future, said Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the public is likely to hear about a host of less familiar diseases and emerging health problems, as outbreaks of such illnesses become "a new norm."

Among the microbes on the horizon are Rift Valley virus, which is transmitted by mosquitoes and causes bleeding and encephalitis; Usutu, an African virus that has since 2001 killed 30 percent of the blackbirds in Vienna; scrub typhus, a mite-borne rickettsial infection also known as tsutsugamushi fever; Nipah virus, a highly fatal disease from pigs; malaria in the United States; lyssa virus, which causes a rabies-like disease; and mosquito-borne Chandipura virus, which caused a large outbreak of encephalitis in India.

Governments not prepared

Each emerging disease carries its particular dangers. But the fact that many governments are inadequately prepared to deal with them is an even bigger threat, Gerberding said during the fourth International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases here last week.

Consider influenza, which has upset a number of dogmas in recent years. Until recently, scientists believed that new strains of influenza had to mix in pigs before the disease could be transmitted to humans. Now it is known that the virus can be transmitted directly from chickens and other birds to humans.

In recent weeks, a deadly avian form of influenza has attacked millions of chickens and other birds in Asia, and experts here were not optimistic that health workers could contain a virus so widespread.

The longer the avian strain of influenza, H5N1, stays around, virologists fear, the greater the chances that it will swap genes with a human strain to create an entirely new virus and, possibly, a pandemic.

"It is a peerless infectious disease threat," said Dr. Keiji Fukuda, a top influenza epidemiologist at the CDC. A worldwide influenza epidemic, Fukuda said, "is inevitable," but "the problem is we do not know when it will come."

Most countries lack a detailed action plan for pandemic influenza. If influenza struck today with the force of the 1918-19 pandemic, participants at the meeting said, 1.8 million Americans would die.

Hellooo
IRENE B.

Critics say that such predictions are unnecessarily alarming and accuse health officials of scaring the public with "a new disease of the month."

What the critics overlook is that public health officials are often in lose-lose situations. If they issue warnings and little or nothing happens, they are accused of hype. If a large outbreak results, they are blamed for doing too little.

SARS was one such near-miss. It seems unlikely that the virus would have disappeared without the emergency isolation and other measures health officials imposed.

Responses to SARS, avian influenza and other emerging diseases "have taxed and strained the entire international health system" beyond its capacity, Fukuda said. "We are thin in terms of numbers of available experts, resources and staff."

No one can predict which infectious disease will test the system next.

Usutu virus

One candidate is the Usutu virus, said Dr. Norbert Nowotny of the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna. The virus had not been identified outside southern Africa since its discovery in 1959 in mosquitoes and birds in the Usutu River area in Swaziland.

In the summer of 2001, different species of birds in Vienna suddenly began dying, in a manner that recalled the beginning of the West Nile epidemic in the United States in 1999. Migrating sparrows probably carried the Usutu virus to Austria, where it has killed 30 percent of Eurasian blackbirds, Nowotny reported.

This is the first time that scientists have documented the deaths of birds from the Usutu virus. The virus has adapted to cold winters and European mosquitoes, moving slowly toward the borders with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, said Nowotny, who now works at the United Arab Emirates University in Al Ain.

So far, Usutu appears to pose little threat to humans; only one individual has become ill, with fever and a mild rash. But officials have been alert for additional cases, in part because virologic cousins of the virus cause encephalitis.

Sometimes diseases return after a long absence.

For example, the United States eradicated malaria decades ago. But the Palm Beach County Health Department in Florida reported eight cases of *Plasmodium vivax* malaria last summer despite intensive mosquito-control measures.

In the summer of 2002, scrub typhus reappeared in the Maldives, in the Indian Ocean, after a 58-year absence from that nation of coral atolls. The Maldives Health Ministry reported 362 cases, including 13 deaths, of the rickettsial disease spread by chiggers.

New York Times

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Extending the lives of heart failure patients

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

PHUKET, Thailand—The car that picked us up at the airport to the hotel had to go through several checkpoints because of alleged terrorist threats which could not be taken lightly after the Bali carnage. But more alarming than the physical terrorism of 9-11 or Bali is the type of terrorism which 19 heart experts from Asia gathered here to discuss.

This "terrorist" disables and kills thousands worldwide every day.

This "terrorist"—cardiovascular disease—can make one's heart fail, causing the hapless patient to huff and puff, and become an invalid.

Everyone in our group lamented that despite the advances in treating heart failure, or HF, it still carries a high rate of death and rehospitalization. Close to 10 percent of patients will die in 60 days. More than half will no longer be around in five years. Practically everyone shall have rested in peace in 10 years.

There is still a big need to come up with new therapies which can significantly optimize treatment of patients suffering from heart failure.

Causes

Among the most common causes of HF are high blood pressure and coronary heart disease characterized by narrowing of the arteries supplying the heart.

The chances of HF increases when one develops a heart attack, which may lead to the weakening of the heart muscles. This is called systolic dysfunction and the heart usually becomes enlarged (cardiomegaly).

But even in patients with normal-sized hearts, one can experience HF. The beating of the heart may be strong enough, but it does not relax as it should during diastole, the heart's resting period in between beats. This is because of the stiffness of heart muscles, which leads to diastolic heart failure. The clinical presentation is very much the same in both systolic and diastolic heart failures.

Symptoms

In many occasions, symptoms may develop insidiously so that HF patients hardly notice them or attribute them to something else. One should suspect heart failure if they have the following signs and symptoms:

- Shortness of breath on exertion or, in severe cases, even at rest
- Difficulty in breathing when lying down
- Nocturnal dyspnea, or waking up at night with a sensation of drowning
- Swelling of the legs due to edema, progressing upward
- Rapid increase in weight due to water retention
- Engorgement of the neck veins.

Patients are advised to see their doctors when they have any of the above symptoms so immediate treatment could be implemented.

HF patients are generally advised therapeutic lifestyle modifications, or TLC, which include quitting smoking and excessive alcohol drinking, avoiding strenuous activities and cutting down on salt and water intake.

Standard medications are also prescribed to get rid of the excess fluid, to improve the pumping function of the heart and to vasodilate, or open up, the blood vessels to reduce the resistance to blood flow.

Improving outlook

Prof. Karl Swedberg, MD, of Göteborg University and Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Östra/Göteborg, Sweden, joined the Asian experts and presented recent scientific data which can give doctors alternatives in improving the cardiovascular outlook of HF patients.

Swedberg is the co-principal investigator of the Charm (Candesartan in Heart failure-Assessment of Reduction in Mortality and morbidity) study, one of the landmark trials in recent years showing that the angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB) class of drugs can significantly reduce cardiovascular deaths and rehospitalization of HF patients.

Landmark trial

The Charm trial was conducted in 26 countries and included 7,601 patients. It is considered the most extensive landmark trial in the use of ARB in heart failure.

So one should not be surprised if his doctor prescribes him these medications even if their blood pressure is normal. These drugs can offer other clinical benefits which are not necessarily related to the lowering of the blood pressure.

In fact, there is good reason to believe that the combination of an ACE inhibitor and an ARB can optimize the benefit in high-risk patients. This is now being studied in the ongoing Ontarget Trial evaluating the beneficial effects of combining the ARB telmisartan and the ACE inhibitor ramipril. Telmisartan is another ARB noted for its sustained control of the blood pressure and beneficial effects on the kidneys.

We are fortunate to have many of these effective ARBs available in our country. Aside from telmisartan, candesartan and valsartan, the other available ARBs are losartan and irbesartan. They all end in -tan, and there's a joke that they might all be owned by Lucio Tan to make up for the adverse effects on the cardiovascular system of cigarette smoking. This is a joke of course, but having a heart attack and heart failure is certainly no joke.

Mushroom: Answer to insomia and sexual hormone imbalance

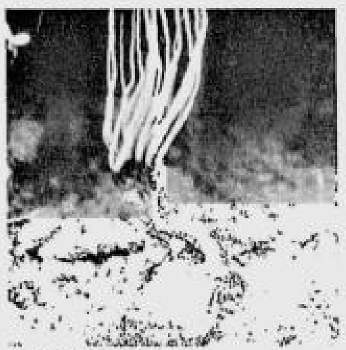
LEIZENSI mushroom *(Xylaria nigripes)* is a saphrophytic fungus that grows naturally in termite nests. It can survive in this kind of environment because of the special matrix consisting of digested or leftover food of male termites and other substances such as white *pediococcus* and mycelia of *collibia albuminosa*. These substances contain xylogen and cellulose, as well as soluble sugar, minerals and nitrogen-containing compounds.

This mushroom has been studied worldwide in the pharmacology field because of its extensive medicinal and pharmaceutical uses. It is also very rare and can be found only in Sichuan, Yunnan and Guandong province of China.

Because of its scarcity, Zhejiang Jolly Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. and Zhejiang University embarked on the fermenting the mycelia of Leizenzi conforming to the highest standard of quality and purity.

Highest standard

Comparative tests of bacterial morphology and recultivation between fermented Leizenzi mycelia and wild Leizenzi mushroom shows identical active components. Hence, utilizing modern methods and the latest technology biopharmaceutical processes, mass production of raw materials needed for commercial purpose was achieved.


LEIZENSI mushroom

Clinical studies have been conducted to validate the health giving properties of Leizenzi mushroom. Toxicological studies were conducted by Zhejiang Provincial Academy of Medical science, Zhejiang Medical University and Hangzhou Hygienic and Antiepidemic Agency. The studies included acute and chronic toxicity tests. The results indicate no untoward side effects or teratogenicity, carcinogenicity and mutagenecity effect.

The active ingredients are adenosine, polysaccharide, 19 kinds of amino acids (including eight kinds that are essential to, but cannot be produced by the human body itself). The test made by Zhejiang Provincial Testing Center using spectrum semi-quantitative method shows that of the known 18 kinds of metal elements essential to the human body, 16 kinds can be found in Leizenzi powder. It also contains high amount of zinc, calcium, iron and a small amount of germanium. The fat-soluble vitamins present in Leizenzi powder are vitamins D2, K1, E and B-carotene, as well as water-soluble vitamins in B1, B2 and B6. O which, vitamins E, and B6 are very rich.

Widely used

To date, the Leizenzi capsules is widely used in Europe, Japan and China as natural remedy for insomnia and sleeping problems, prostate enlargement and menstrual disorder (including menopausal syndrome). Here in the Philippines, Better Herbs Inc. has made the Leizenzi mushroom powder available through Better Sleep food supplement.

It is now available at all branches of Mercury Drug, Manson Drug, Save More Drug, Emilene's Drugstore and other leading drugstores.

Measles kills 10,000 kids each year

ALTHOUGH improvements in medicine and various government campaigns have considerably helped reduce the mortality rate from measles, the disease remains one of the country's top killers of children.

A study conducted by the Department of Health showed that an average of 10,000 Filipino children die from measles annually. It further shows that in every 1,000 live births, about 25 infants die from the disease. However, the number of deaths is higher among unvaccinated children in the older age groups.

Measles is a disease that attacks children with very low immune system. Its symptoms include severe fever, coughing, breathing difficulty, colds, rashes and diarrhea. Without proper treatment, it can cause blindness and ear infection, and may even result in death in less than a week. The health of an unborn child can be severely affected if the mother contracts measles during pregnancy.

Vaccination

The best defense against measles is a strengthened immune system. This is primarily done through vaccination, which in majority of cases, almost always ensures the nonrecurrence of measles. This is why parents are advised to have their children vaccinated during the first two years of their lives.

Through its Ligtas Tigdas 2004 campaign started in February, the DOH targets to bring measles vaccine to more than 18 million Filipino kids aged between 9 months and 8 years. Funded by the Japanese government's donation of $7.8 million, this year's program is an extension of the successful and long-running DOH campaign.

Filipino pediatric gastroenterologist Ma. Lourdes Genuino said that apart from vaccination, another way to fight measles is to strengthen the child's immune system.

'Good bacteria'

Medical studies have shown that Prebiotics, the natural carbohydrates that help induce the growth of bifidus, otherwise known as the "good bacteria," helps strengthen the humoral response. Meaning, in babies, Prebiotics has been proven to help increase antibody titers against measles.

Dr. Genuino said the best source of Prebiotics is still mother's milk, which is why doctors recommend that mothers breastfeed their newborn babies immediately. Breastfed babies are more resistant to diseases as they grow, because breast milk strengthens their immune system.

In her study on Prebiotics, Dr. Genuino noted that babies drinking milk supplements with Prebio 1, a special Prebiotic mixture developed by Nestlé in its research center in Switzerland, have higher postvaccine measles antibody counts than those taking standard milk supplements. The study also confirmed that a flourishing flora of good microorganisms that benefit from Prebiotics almost always results in a stronger immune system for babies.

Moreover, clinical trials conducted by doctors reveal that babies who have taken Prebio 1-enhanced supplements prior to vaccination develop better immune responses than those who take regular supplements without Prebiotics.

Do you have 'kulani'?

HAVE YOU EVER felt a painful bean or santol seed-like mass under your armpits or *singit* whenever you have fever or a wound (or abscess) in your arms or legs? That lump is an enlarged lymph node.

Lymph nodes are specialized organs of the body that process infectious agents such as bacteria and virus. Whenever a lymph node increases in size, it is palpable and feels like a mass. Other areas where enlarged lymph nodes can be felt are at the neck, under the jaw and chin, and at the back of the head.

The lymph nodes try to stop an infection from spreading, but when the infection overwhelms it, the lymph node becomes inflamed and increases in size—a condition called lymphadenitis.

In the vernacular, enlarged lymph nodes are called *kulani*.

Lymphoma

Lymph nodes also become enlarged when its cells transform into cancer. Cancer of the lymph node is called lymphoma. It can develop anywhere in the body where lymph nodes are located. Lymphomas can be seen and felt under the skin because there are numerous minute lymph nodes under the skin.

Tonsils are lymph nodes. Hence, an enlarged tonsil can either be an inflammation (tonsillitis) or cancer (lymphoma). Lymphoma can also occur deep inside the body such as in the lymph tissues of the thymus, stomach, intestines, liver, spleen, bone marrow and brain.

How can you differentiate infection from cancer in an enlarged lymph node?

An enlarged lymph node due to infection is soft or doughy, and painful even at early onset. Fever may occur and is always accompanied by an obvious infection (e.g., abscess, decayed tooth).

An enlarged lymph node due to cancer progressively enlarges and affects other lymph nodes. It is hard and not painful at early onset, but becomes painful when it is quite large, immovable and presses on a nerve.

Lymphoma may also be accompanied by fever, as well as unexplained weight loss of at least 10 percent over a short period of time, lack of energy, general fatigue and drenching night sweats.

Consult your physician if you are afraid your *kulani* is a lymphoma. Your doctor will look for the cause of the enlarged lymph node.

Unlike other forms of cancer, lymphoma is very responsive to treatment. The primary treatment strategy is drugs, with radiotherapy adjunct.

Learning science from oil firm execs

BENJIE Latorre has the unique experience of knowing his oil, gas and fuel science concepts and being able to share them with youngsters.

Through Caltex's community program, Latorre, a Caltex Reseller Sales Support manager, together with other executives volunteered to tutor kids from elementary schools. Called Family Science, these Caltex volunteers spent time in four public schools in Pandacan, Manila, to help students get their gravity, osmosis and condensation concepts straight.

Caltex (Philippines) Inc. combined two of its educational programs, Caltex Mentor Program (CMP) and Family Science, for the first time to benefit Bagong Barangay Elementary School, Bagong Diwa Elementary School and Beata Elementary School, and the host school, Jacinto Zamora Elementary School.

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Developing interest in science

Family Science, a program for schoolchildren in grades four to six and participated in by their parents and teachers, aims to develop interest in science through an innovative hands-on curriculum that demonstrates how science connects to people's daily lives. By showing that science is not intimidating, proponents of the program hope to fulfill the long-term goal of encouraging children to consider careers in science, math and engineering.

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Family Science benefited at least 600 students and parents, as well as several teacher-volunteers from the four beneficiary-schools. About 75 first grade CMP beneficiaries were taught reading in English.

FEMININE HYGIENE

Ma. Luisa V. Torralba-Mangubat, MD, FPOGS, FPCS

Contrary to popular belief, a woman's private part is not a bacteria-free zone. In fact, it is teeming with bacteria and other such organisms. However, it does not mean that it is infected. These organisms maintain a certain balance such that their growth is kept in check preventing one organism from overwhelming the others. The secret in maintaining this balance is proper feminine hygiene.

Feminine hygiene is started as early as the newborn period. Female babies must have their external genitalia properly washed by the caregiver to prevent infections such as UTI (urinary tract infection) which has become more common with the advent of disposable diapers. Diapers do not cause UTI but it is the infrequent changing of the diapers that soak the baby's external genitalia for hours on end in her own urine.

As a woman enters adolescence, her body produces hormones, one effect of which is the increase in a woman's vaginal secretions. When these secretions are allowed to accumulate, they become a breeding ground for unfavorable organisms. This is especially true during menstruation since blood is a very good medium for bacteria to grow.

Proper Technique

The important factor is thorough cleansing. A woman's external genitalia, called the *vulva*, is composed of an external mound called *labia majora* (the outer lip) inside which is the *labia minora* (the inner lip) which in turn hides the urinary opening (*urethra*) and the *vagina*. Simply washing the outer portion (*labia majora*) is not enough. Bacteria can hide even in the folds of the labia minora. The proper technique is to separate the outer and inner lips to be able to wash this area thoroughly.

Plain water is enough to wash off ordinary vaginal secretions. At times however, there are secretions that are more difficult to wash off. Using mild soaps or hypoallergenic soap can be of help. In recent years, there has been an influx of products specifically designed for cleansing the sensitive female genitalia. This is advantageous to women since they now have a wide array of products to choose from and see what best suits them.

Sanitary Pads and Pantiliners

Sanitary pads were specifically developed to absorb the bloody discharge during menstruation. These are made of highly absorbent materials thereby drawing away the blood from the external surface. This prevents prolonged contact between blood and the external genitalia thereby minimizing irritation and possible infection. Sanitary pads are now made from materials with much improved absorbent quality than what our moms have used in the past. Improvements did not stop with just the absorbent materials. Recent design innovations have made it possible to prevent leaks from a much heavier flow, such as larger, longer pads with flow channels and/or side protective barriers. There are also variants for day and night use and even specifically for use immediately after childbirth. It makes the woman more comfortable without worrying about bloody stains. It makes her free to do her usual activity.

Pantiliners, on the other hand, are much thinner than sanitary pads. These were designed to absorb light menstrual flow (especially immediately pre- and post-menstruation) and other vaginal discharge such as the daily feminine secretions, sweat and urine (for women with light incontinence). Pantiliners consist of a soft surface topsheet made of a cloth-like material or a perforated polyethylene film (commonly known as plastic), an absorbent core and a moisture impermeable polyethylene backsheet film. To make them more comfortable to use, some pantiliners are made to be breathable to allow air to circulate through the liner. As with sanitary pads, innovations continue in both design and materials with the end point of making the woman feel clean and fresh the whole day.

Pads, Pantiliners and Feminine Hygiene

Sanitary pads and pantiliners may be of help in promoting feminine hygiene. They can minimize the contact between blood and other secretions with the female external genitalia. Increased wetness can cause changes in the normal microbial flora leading to an outright vaginal infection. To be able to do this, they must be replaced once they get moist or wet. It is a good habit to change pads and pantiliners every 3-4 hours even if they are not fully soaked. Due to the much improved absorbency of newer materials, they may seem dry at the topsheet but has actually accumulated the unwanted liquid and deposited it in their inner layers. Leaving a soaked sanitary pad or pantiliner all day defeats the very purpose for which they were made.

Proper feminine hygiene must be practiced at all times. Keep yourself clean and infection will be the least of your worries. Prevention is always better than cure.

(Ma. Luisa V. Torralba-Mangubat, M.D. is an obstetrician-gynecologist. She is a fellow of the Philippine Ob-Gyn Society and the Philippine College of Surgeons. She is married to Dr. Royce DR Mangubat, a pediatrician, and they have 2 children, David and Margarita Claire. Dr Malu writes a monthly column on ob-gyn for the e-zine Herword (www.herword.com) One of her earliest articles was on Myths and Misconceptions About Menstruation.)

Feel fresh everyday with Modess and Carefree

Girls of all ages need to feel fresh everyday. Feeling fresh and clean makes one ready to face daily challenges with confidence.

To help us feel clean and fresh, we need daily feminine care to suit our more active and demanding lifestyle, specially during our monthly period.

Modess, which has been in the forefront of relevant product innovations in sanitary napkins, has continued in its commitment to provide us girls with innovative products to keep us protected so we are confident to do what we've got to do.

Modess, which is the No. 1 napkin brand in the country, has pioneered the development of anti-leak gel core, 4-wall protection, backflow guard, and most recently, the 18 anti-leak channels, that help direct flow of liquid and traps it in, providing leak protection on all sides. It also has a clean and cottony soft cover that helps one feel dry and comfortable, and a body fit design to conform to our body better.

Since girls are unique by themselves, Modess has developed a whole range of sanitary protection variants to suit a girl's specific needs. For heavy flow, **Modess Regular**, which has the 18 anti-leak channels for all around protection, let's you do what you've got to do. For active girls on the go there's **Modess Ultra Thin**, a breakthrough ultra thin pad that can absorb your heavy flow - so thin you can almost do anything. For the free-spirited teen, there's **Modess Spirit** with a fun design to ensure discretion. And for stress-free sleep and all-night comfort, there's **Modess All Nights** with its unique backflow guard and **Modess Longs** with an extra long design for better coverage and protection.

Aside from practicing proper feminine hygiene during our monthly cycle, we also need everyday protection to help us feel fresh and clean all day.

Like Modess, Carefree has also been consistent in coming up with brilliant breakthroughs in pantiliners to suit every woman's dynamic lifestyle. It has pioneered the **Long liner** to provide us with extra protection, the first contour-shaped pantyliner through **Carefree Comfort**, and the first **breathable** and **ultra thin** pantliners. Carefree was also the first to introduce the **G-string** and **Black** pantiliners, and recently, the perfectly comfortable **Carefree Barely There**.

Aside from pantyliners, Carefree was the first to launch a pH-balanced feminine wash with its **Carefree Intimate Feminine Wash**. With a pH level of 5.5, it's proven mild for our skin, for everyday intimate protection. Also from Carefree comes the new **Carefree Refreshing Feminine Wipes** – disposable personal cleansing cloths that will help us get that freshly washed feeling anytime, anywhere.

From sanitary napkins to pantyliners, feminine wash and wipes, Modess and Carefree has it all – because women are special and deserves nothing but the best in feminine care.

ADVT

Extending the lives of heart failure patients

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

PHUKET, Thailand—The car that picked us up at the airport to the hotel had to go through several checkpoints because of alleged terrorist threats which could not be taken lightly after the Bali carnage. But more alarming than the physical terrorism of 9-11 or Bali is the type of terrorism which 19 heart experts from Asia gathered here to discuss.

This "terrorist" disables and kills thousands worldwide every day.

This "terrorist"—cardiovascular disease—can make one's heart fail, causing the hapless patient to huff and puff, and become an invalid.

Everyone in our group lamented that despite the advances in treating heart failure, or HF, it still carries a high rate of death and rehospitalization. Close to 10 percent of patients will die in 60 days. More than half will no longer be around in five years. Practically everyone shall have rested in peace in 10 years.

There is still a big need to come up with new therapies which can significantly optimize treatment of patients suffering from heart failure.

Causes

Among the most common causes of HF are high blood pressure and coronary heart disease characterized by narrowing of the arteries supplying the heart.

The chances of HF increases when one develops a heart attack, which may lead to the weakening of the heart muscles. This is called systolic dysfunction and the heart usually becomes enlarged (cardiomegaly).

But even in patients with normal-sized hearts, one can experience HF. The beating of the heart may be strong enough, but it does not relax as it should during diastole, the heart's resting period in between beats. This is because of the stiffness of heart muscles, which leads to diastolic heart failure. The clinical presentation is very much the same in both systolic and diastolic heart failures.

Symptoms

In many occasions, symptoms may develop insidiously so that HF patients hardly notice them or attribute them to something else. One should suspect heart failure if they have the following signs and symptoms:

- Shortness of breath on exertion or, in severe cases, even at rest
- Difficulty in breathing when lying down
- Nocturnal dyspnea, or waking up at night with a sensation of drowning
- Swelling of the legs due to edema, progressing upward
- Rapid increase in weight due to water retention
- Engorgement of the neck veins.

Patients are advised to see their doctors when they have any of the above symptoms so immediate treatment could be implemented.

HF patients are generally advised therapeutic lifestyle modifications, or TLC, which include quitting smoking and excessive alcohol drinking, avoiding strenuous activities and cutting down on salt and water intake.

Standard medications are also prescribed to get rid of the excess fluid, to improve the pumping function of the heart and to vasodilate, or open up, the blood vessels to reduce the resistance to blood flow.

Improving outlook

Prof. Karl Swedberg, MD, of Goteborg University and Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Östra/Göteborg, Sweden, joined the Asian experts and presented recent scientific data which can give doctors alternatives in improving the cardiovascular outlook of HF patients.

Swedberg is the co-principal investigator of the Charm (Candesartan in Heart failure-Assessment of Reduction in Mortality and morbidity) study, one of the landmark trials in recent years showing that the angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB) class of drugs can significantly reduce cardiovascular deaths and rehospitalization of HF patients.

Landmark trial

The Charm trial was conducted in 26 countries and included 7,601 patients. It is considered the most extensive landmark trial in the use of ARB in heart failure.

So one should not be surprised if his doctor prescribes him these medications even if their blood pressure is normal. These drugs can offer other clinical benefits which are not necessarily related to the lowering of the blood pressure.

In fact, there is good reason to believe that the combination of an ACE inhibitor and an ARB can optimize the benefit in high-risk patients. This is now being studied in the ongoing Ontarget Trial evaluating the beneficial effects of combining the ARB telmisartan and the ACE inhibitor ramipril. Telmisartan is another ARB noted for its sustained control of the blood pressure and beneficial effects on the kidneys.

We are fortunate to have many of these effective ARBs available in our country. Aside from telmisartan, candesartan and valsartan, the other available ARBs are losartan and irbesartan. They all end in -tan, and there's a joke that they might all be owned by Lucio Tan to make up for the adverse effects on the cardiovascular system of cigarette smoking. This is a joke of course, but having a heart attack and heart failure is certainly no joke.

Mushroom: Answer to insomia and sexual hormone imbalance

LEIZENSI mushroom *(Xylaria nigripes)* is a saphrophytic fungus that grows naturally in termite nests. It can survive in this kind of environment because of the special matrix consisting of digested or leftover food of male termites and other substances such as white *pediococcus* and mycelia of *collibia albuminosa*. These substances contain xylogen and cellulose, as well as soluble sugar, minerals and nitrogen-containing compounds.

This mushroom has been studied worldwide in the pharmacology field because of its extensive medicinal and pharmaceutical uses. It is also very rare and can be found only in Sichuan, Yunnan and Guandong province of China.

Because of its scarcity, Zhejiang Jolly Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. and Zhejiang University embarked on the fermenting the mycelia of Leizenzi conforming to the highest standard of quality and purity.

Highest standard

Comparative tests of bacterial morphology and recultivation between fermented Leizenzi mycelia and wild Leizenzi mushroom shows identical active components. Hence, utilizing modern methods and the latest technology biopharmaceutical processes, mass production of raw materials needed for commercial purpose was achieved.

LEIZENSI mushroom

Clinical studies have been conducted to validate the health giving properties of Leizenzi mushroom. Toxicological studies were conducted by Zhejiang Provincial Academy of Medical science, Zhejiang Medical University and Hangzhou Hygienic and Antiepidemic Agency. The studies included acute and chronic toxicity tests. The results indicate no untoward side effects or teratogenicity, carcinogenicity and mutagenecity effect.

The active ingredients are adenosine, polysaccharide, 19 kinds of amino acids (including eight kinds that are essential to, but cannot be produced by the human body itself). The test made by Zhejiang Provincial Testing Center using spectrum semi-quantitative method shows that of the known 18 kinds of metal elements essential to the human body, 16 kinds can be found in Leizenzi powder. It also contains high amount of zinc, calcium, iron and a small amount of germanium. The fat-soluble vitamins present in Leizenzi powder are vitamins D2, K1, E and B-carotene, as well as water-soluble vitamins in B1, B2 and B6. O which, vitamins E, and B6 are very rich.

Widely used

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(Ma. Luisa V. Torralba-Mangubat, MD, is an obstetrician-gynecologist. She is a fellow of the Philippine Obstetrical Society and the Philippine College of Surgeons. She is married to Dr. Ro[illegible] DR Mangubat [illegible] David and Margarita [illegible] Dr. Malu [illegible] monthly [illegible] [illegible])

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To help us feel clean and fresh, we need daily feminine care to suit our more active and demanding lifestyle, specially during our monthly period.

Modess, which has been in the forefront of relevant product innovations in sanitary napkins, has continued in its commitment to provide us girls with innovative products to keep us protected so we are confident to do what we've got to do.

Modess, which is the No. 1 napkin brand in the country, has pioneered the development of anti-leak gel core, 4-wall protection, backflow guard, and most recently, the 18 anti-leak channels, that help direct flow of liquid and traps it in, providing leak protection on all sides. It also has a clean and cottony soft cover that helps one feel dry and comfortable, and a body fit design to conform to our body better.

Since girls are unique by themselves, Modess has developed a whole range of sanitary protection variants to suit a girl's specific needs. For heavy flow, **Modess Regular**, which has the 18 anti-leak channels for all around protection, let's you do what you've got to do. For active girls on the go there's **Modess Ultra Thin**, a breakthrough ultra thin pad that can absorb your heavy flow - so thin you can almost do anything. For the free-spirited teen, there's **Modess Spirit** with a fun design to ensure discretion. And for stress-free sleep and all-night comfort, there's **Modess All Nights** with its unique backflow guard and **Modess Longs** with an extra long design for better coverage and protection.

Aside from practicing proper feminine hygiene during our monthly cycle, we also need everyday protection to help us feel fresh and clean all day.

Like Modess, Carefree has also been consistent in coming up with brilliant breakthroughs in pantiliners to suit every woman's dynamic lifestyle. It has pioneered the **Long liner** to provide us with extra protection, the first contour-shaped pantyliner through **Carefree Comfort**, and the first **breathable and ultra thin pantliners**. Carefree was also the first to introduce the **G-string and Black pantiliners**, and recently the perfectly comfortable **Carefree Barely There**.

Aside from pantyliners, Carefree was the first to launch a pH-balanced feminine wash with its **Carefree Intimate Feminine Wash**. With a pH level of 5.5, it's proven mild for our skin for everyday intimate protection. Also from Carefree comes the new **Carefree Refreshing Feminine Wipes** - disposable personal cleansing cloths that will help us get that freshly washed feeling anytime anywhere.

From sanitary napkins to pantyliners, feminine wash and wipes, Modess and Carefree has it all – because women are special and deserves nothing but the best in feminine care.

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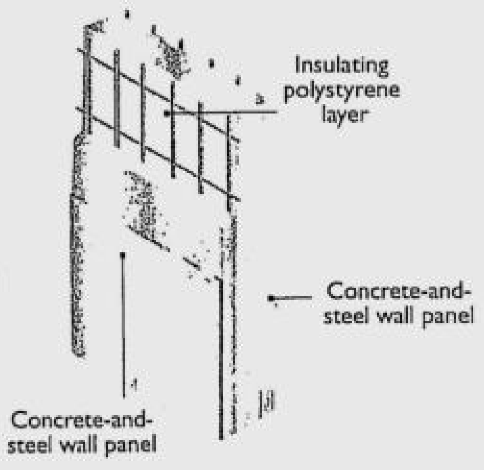
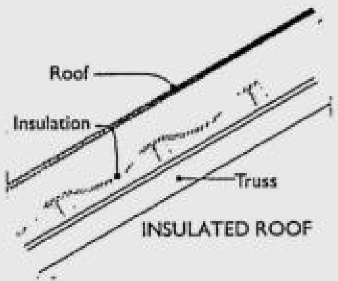
Certified by the Instituto Giordano in Italy, the polystyrene-insulated wall panels keep interior temperatures cool even when homes are exposed to direct heat outside.


Insulating polystyrene layer
Concrete-and-steel wall panel
Concrete-and-steel wall panel

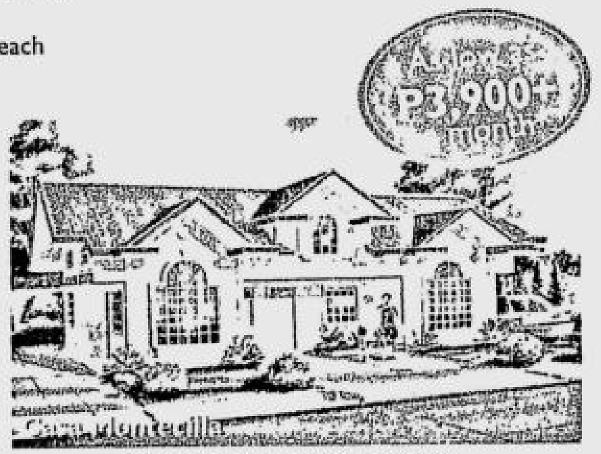
SANDWICHED WALL PANELS



INSULATED ROOF

Instituto Giordano's tests show that while the air temperature outside reaches 32.31 degrees, homes with polystyrene-insulated wall panels have a temperature of only 8.72 degrees on the inside. And while the exterior walls reach a surface temperature of 30.85 degrees, the walls inside reach only 9.21 degrees.

Empire East SUNTRUST has put its energy-saving expertise to work on its ongoing large-scale community housing projects.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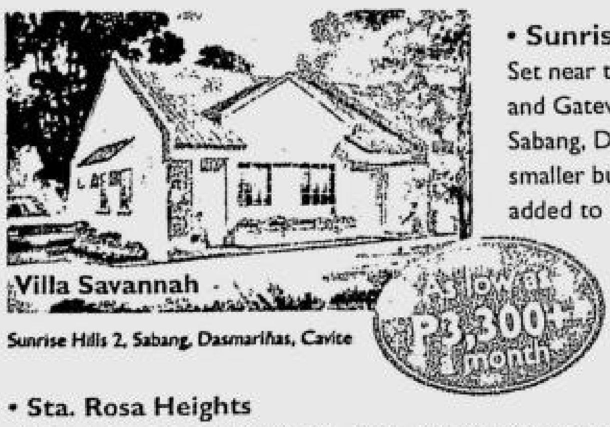
Casa Montecillo

Sunrise Hills 1, Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite

- **Governor's Hills**
  Governor's Hills is the flagship community project of Empire East SUNTRUST in Gen. Trias, Cavite. The 89-hectare development features single-detached and duplex homes in six Mexican-Californian designs and European-inspired triplex homes, as well as an impressive array of amenities.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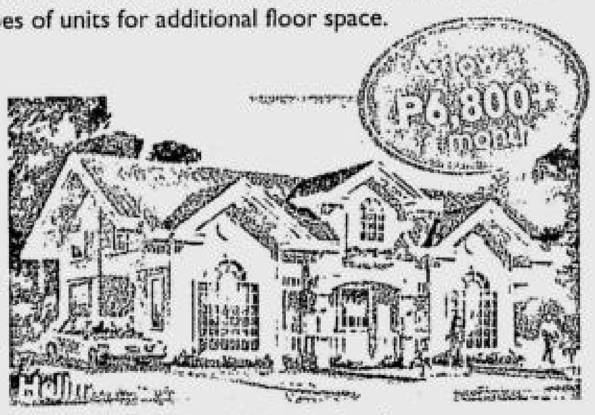
Villa Savannah

Sunrise Hills 2, Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite

- **Sunrise Hills**
  Set near top industrial zones such as the First Cavite Industrial Estate and Gateway Business Park, Sunrise Hills boasts a choice location in Sabang, Dasmariñas, Cavite. It offers triplex homes in Phase 1 and slightly smaller but more affordable homes in Phase 2. A mezzanine level can be added to both types of units for additional floor space.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Sta. Rosa Heights, Sta. Rosa, Laguna

- **Sta. Rosa Heights**
  A 25-hectare community in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Sta. Rosa Heights features well-designed single-detached, duplex and triplex homes on top of thoughtful amenities. Just minutes away are key destinations such as Tagaytay, Laguna TechnoPark, PNP Academy and Paseo Mall.

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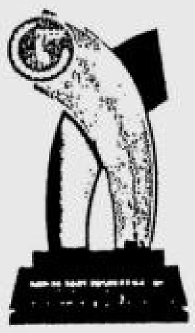

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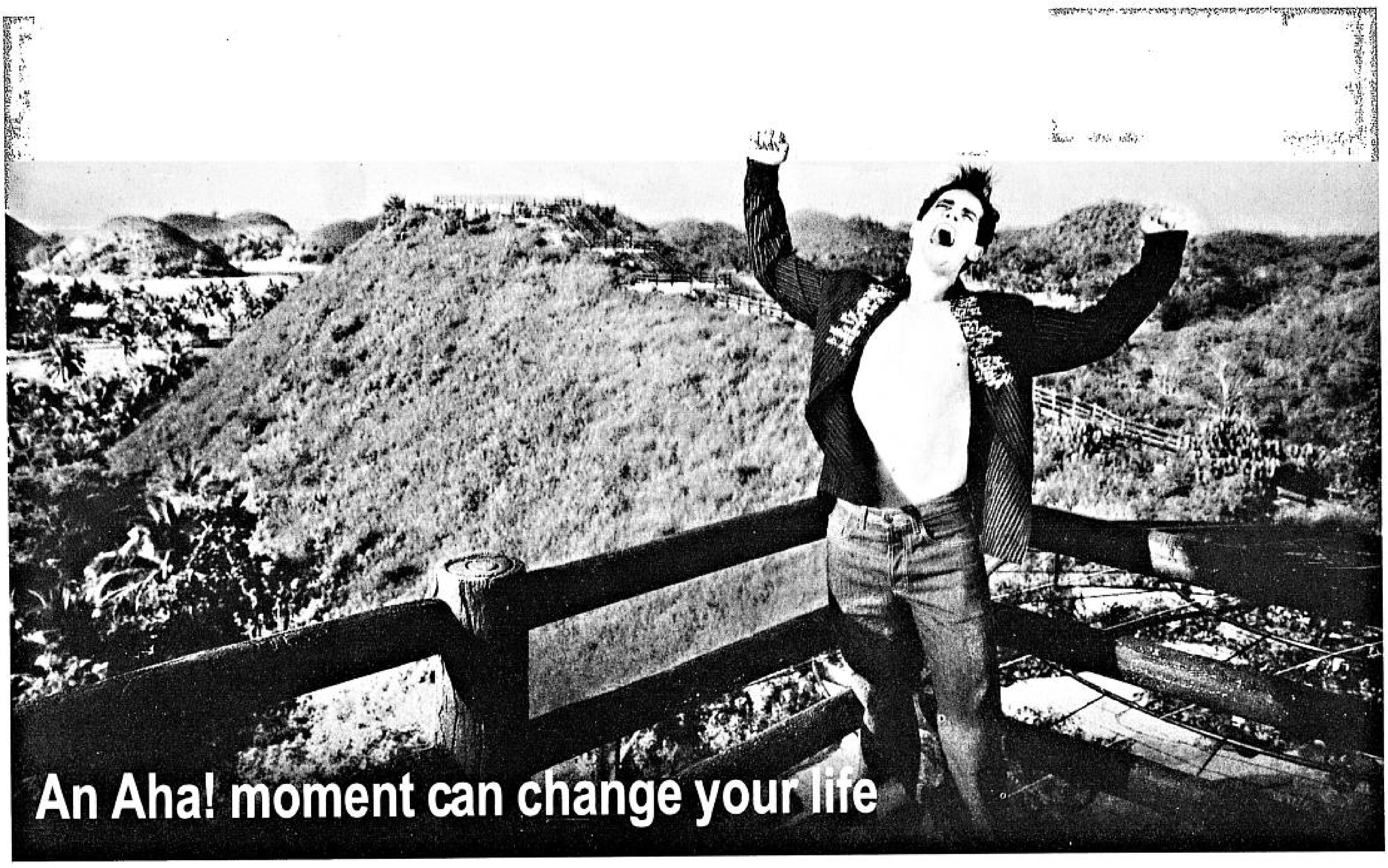

An Aha! moment can change your life

By Marge C. Enriquez

Photo: Wig Tysmans Styling: Noel Manapat
Model: Matt Hadfield Grooming: Krist Bansuelo
Clothes: Celio Location: Sagbayan Peak, Bohol

NO problem!

This is a catch phrase that means a glitch is mere perception or one analysis of a circumstance. However, we have been brought up to use the grammar of problems to account for everything in our lives, including our thoughts and emotions. And then we split hairs trying to figure out why the event occurred in the first place.

Modern-day enlightenment is the Big Thing right now, especially with marketers and speakers taking advantage of Lent. Regardless of season, legions of books, workshops and lecturers have all stormed this planet to help men make sense of their stressful lives. They are waking us up from the slumber of ignorance to the creative opportunity which every life circumscribes.

London-based motivational speaker and management development expert Mike George sums up what all these books and modern-day sages have been saying, with another book: "The Seven Ahas! of Highly Enlightened Souls." (Aha! as in that eureka moment.) He points out that no course or guru can really put magic into your life.

"Transformation is a frequent promise, but a promise that is almost impossible to deliver. Why?" He explains: "All the techniques, tools and methods in the world are of little value unless you are motivated."

No matter how content people think they are, George adds, they are experiencing some form of sorrow, however subtle it may be. Majority are in denial that they should be accountable for their own feelings. He says this is because we have been conditioned for so long to blame other people or situations for our insecurities or inconveniences.

George devotes a section on the paradoxes of relationships. Here are the Seven Insights:

Insight 1. You are not what you have been taught to think you are! Don't limit yourself to your name, position, nationality, profession, physical looks, possessions or convictions. They are merely descriptive tags and roles you have to play, but they are not the true you. In reality, George underscores, "You are the being aspect of the human." This realization, he says, is the first step to unlock problems with our own self-esteem and our relationships.

Insight 2. You are drop-dead stunningly gorgeous, but you won't see your beauty in the bathroom mirror. You will experience true beauty when you stop basing your self-worth on what others say about your looks, behavior or personality. George points out that we all have a treasure trove of qualities which, like little children, need to be cajoled out of our hearts. In the end, true beauty is when you dispense anything from your heart without any hidden agenda or expectation of returns.

Insight 3. Destiny never leaves your hands. It only seems to! Society has brainwashed us into perceiving the worst in ourselves, in others and in situations. No matter how positive a person or situation is, we tend to look for the bad and even fabricate the negative which often doesn't even exist. The ultimate sensibility is that there's a reason for everything that happens, and it's up to you to discover what it's telling you. However, if you take things personally or see things wrongly, you will react instead of acknowledging creatively.

"It's not what you say or do to me that makes me feel this way; it's what I do with what you do or say to me that makes me feel this way," says George. (Repeat this mantra a hundred times a day, and you will be immune from the gossip about you.)

Insight 4. Blind belief makes life an unhappy, stressful experience. Common beliefs about ourselves and others are fatal. If you believe your inadequacies or limits, then you are stuck in your comfort zones. You stop learning and growing. In relationships, we tend to feed off "blocker beliefs." Judging and labeling someone blocks the flow of energy in the relationship.

If someone let us down, betrayed us or, by our own fault, did not behave according to how we wanted them to, we attribute our distress (even if we sometimes deny it) to them. It's time to shatter these false beliefs.

Insight 5. You think you're free, don't you? No you're not! Not until you make conscious daily choices about what you do with the power of your life. One of our greatest vulnerabilities is wanting to dominate others in body, mind and spirit. If you get disturbed by anyone, it means you are trying to rein in something you can't control.

"The day will come when you meet someone who will not respond to your threat. They have realized that they are responsible for their

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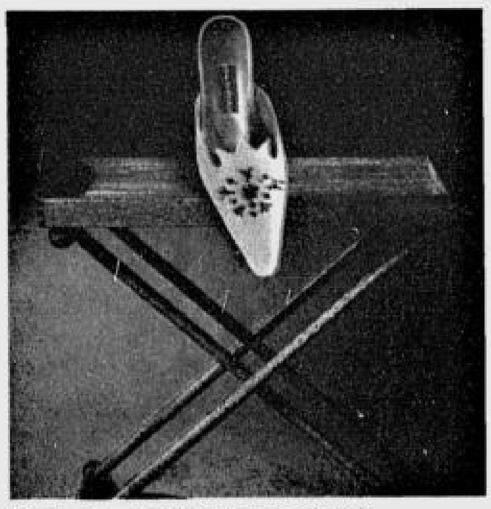
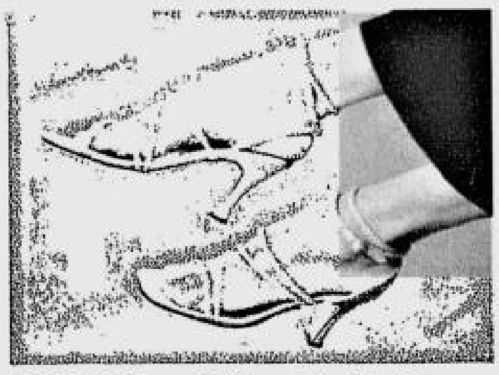
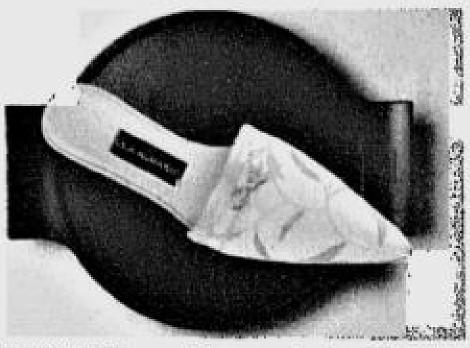


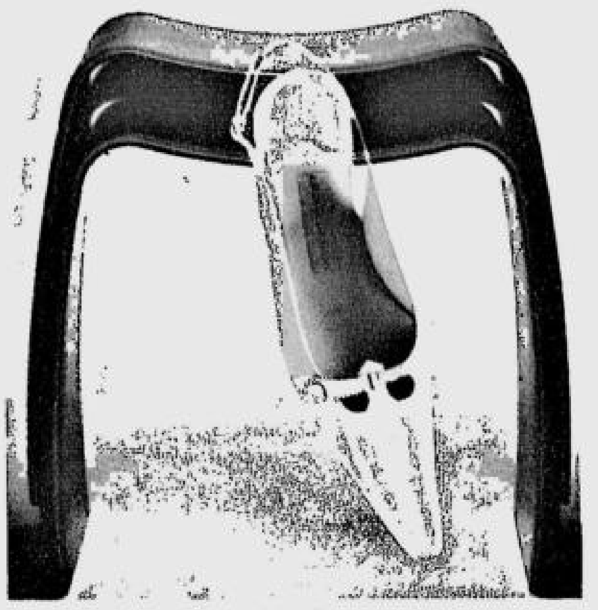
THAI silk mule with black beadwork



BRAIDED silver calf skin sandals with criss-cross ankle straps for summer nights



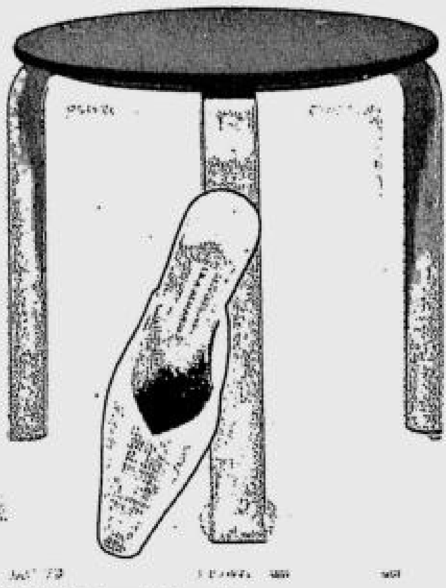
LAMBSKIN slipper with mango instep



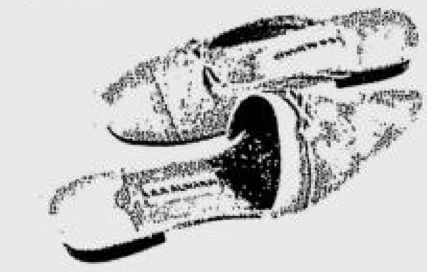
MOUSE slingback in classic pink

SWISS printed linen slingback and handbag with a round fucshia kidskin handle

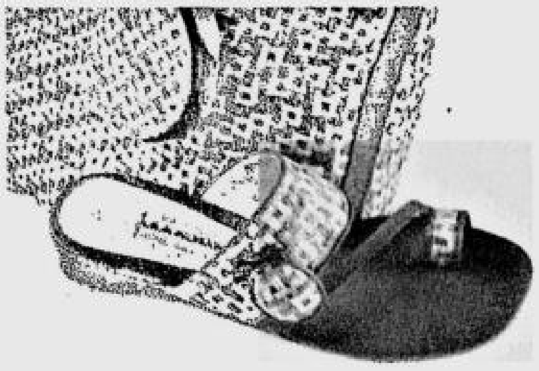
FRUITY bucket bag and slide



EMBOSSED lambskin mule



POWDER blue and sage printed ballerina mules



WOVEN beach bag and wedge slide

Land of lilac and lime

By Bea Valdes
Contributor

Photos by Patrick Uy
Pictorial direction by Antonio Salac Santos
Digital imaging by Mark Inducil

Psychologists have said that women who collect shoes are imagining journeys. Lila Almario is happy to indulge these dreamers

I PRESUME it was a balmy afternoon in Ancient Egypt, when the fair maiden Rhodopis took a dip in the river Nile. An eagle swooped down and carried off one of her petite slippers. Legend has it that the bird flew far into Memphis, where it deposited the footwear at the feet of King Psamik. The ruler then scoured the sandy corners of his kingdom, obsessed with finding the slipper's owner.

Thousands of young maidens came from far and near to squeeze their feet into it. Finally, King Psanik encountered Rhodopis—she with the dainty feet and the slipper's other half—and married her. The third pyramid of Gizeh is a tribute to their union.

This archaic take on the Cinderella story binds the elements of romance with shoe size, (not to mention the perils, pitfalls and accidental merits of bathing in public.) It is yet another version of the saga for Solemates, the search for the right match, the perfect fit!

Lila whispers

A similar afternoon leads me to Lila Almario's showroom in San Juan, a pristine oasis flanked by a lotto station and an assemblage of tire shops. I enter a land of lilac and lime.

She speaks in the same hushed, muted tones that color the walls of her shop. She tells me how her lucrative business started with one wedding in 1995, and then five weddings the following year. She didn't really know how to make fabric shoes, she says as she had trained in leatherwear in Italy.

Her grandparents started the famous Gregg Shoes in the 1950s. She recalls how, when she began custom-designing, people came to her specifically requesting Gregg Shoes slippers. She was alarmed: would she become a slipper factory?

But now it's glass slippers that is associated with her name. Lila's shoes are among the most sought-after necessities of Filipina brides and wedding entourages. Her workforce has grown from four people to 50.

She leads me into her Aladdin's cave, where materials are stacked in colorful cacophony. On a long table lie bolts of leather, a jelly-bean bunch of shoes, manifold molds, and shoe accessories. I am charmed by the wooden molds, on which mock sandals are already being created. Pumps, sandals, strappy heels and mules abound. Shoe boxes line one wall, each carrying a girl's name. She points to one that shares mine, saying, "I wonder what that one looks like."

Lila ponders

"Should I?"

Lila unwraps a roll of snakeskin material. "What do you think?"

I nod. Yes, I like it a lot. Bronze, copper, gold, slithery and sexy, these amazing metallics would complement a summer tan perfectly.

"In Italy, metallics are always for summer," she muses.

The conversation moves on to her new designs, which she has laughingly baptized her "fruit collection." We discuss the idea of brights for night. She has a pair of pumps in printed linen, very Palm Beach Babe, which I can't take my eyes off. She creates confections—sweet and sugary, sherbets in lemon, lime and apple, kid leather in a candy shop.

Lila favors Italian lambskin, which comes in unique textures, and Japanese baby calfskin, which is much softer than the adult's. Her signature tapered vamp and pointed toe elongate a woman's foot and make it look sexy.

She then proudly shows me a pair of boots in black leather and suede, which she just made for herself.

Meeting Lila, one revisits the magic of Dorothy's ruby red slippers, and hear the music in Elvis' blue suede shoes. She confides that the local market prefers vibrant colors, and tells me that lime is a best seller. So is fuchsia.

This may shed some light on the Filipino woman's character. As the eyes are the windows to the soul, shoes are said to be the gateway to the psyche. Freudian slippers, if you please. Psychologists have said that a woman who collects shoes is searching for enlightenment. Either that, or she is a frustrated traveler, imagining journeys in her mind. In that sense, Lila Almario dispenses sweet therapy for dreamers.

LOCATIONS: 151-3 N. DOMINGO ST., SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA (TEL. 724-4732 OR 725-2231)/ THE POWER PLANT, ROCKWELL CENTER (TEL. 898-1838)

Brassiere chic

NO longer a utilitarian piece in the wardrobe, the bra has been elevated to a fashion statement. Many companies are now marketing it as fashion lingerie.

In the past, bras were purchased without much thought and used till they wore out. Today new bra styles, like outerwear, come in seasons and are designed to match the rest of the outfit. For instance, as fashion has become more revealing, companies such as Wacoal have come up with a line of t-shirt bras that can be worn under tight or sheer fabrics, low backs and plunging necklines. The omnipresence of the spaghetti strap has given birth to the razor back or multi-way strapped bras. Women's penchant for flaunting cleavages has produced the nipple-concealing contour bra, which amply displays the bosom but provides underwire support.

And as fabrics and trends become more high-tech, lingerie firms are making a run for new materials that provide better stretch and wearability. While still wanting their bras to fit, women will henceforth demand that these should look more fashionable as well.

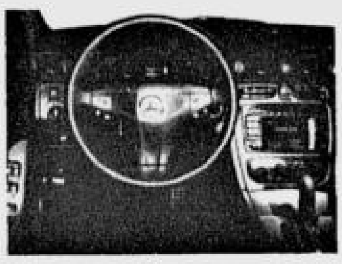
STYLE STATEMENT. Wacoal model Joy Hendrickson wears a steamy bra with floral embroidery, a sheer panel in the cups and a front hook with rhinestone.

Benz and sensibilities

Stalking the C180

By Martin Valdes
Contributor

ANTHRACITE leather upholstery



INTELLIGENT panel for the techie

SLIMMER model for lean economic times

WELCOME to the jungle. Metro Manila is a tangle of asphalt and metal sweltering in tropical heat and playing host to a menagerie of industrial fauna. This is a biome measured by how much money you make, what clothes you wear, and what car you drive.

And in this modern wasteland, there is no more comprehensive a symbol of success than a Mercedes-Benz. There are other vehicles that connote a comfortable lifestyle, but none epitomize the concepts of excellence and luxury more than the four-wheeled *fraulein* with the three-pointed star emblem. In the jungle, Mercedes-Benz is on top of the food chain, a true car-nivore—and the C180 is one of its hungry cubs.

Cats Motors Inc., custodian to some of Manila's most impressive alloy predators, recently introduced the limited edition C180 to the Philippine market. The previous C-Class has been with us for nearly a decade and has carved out a solid reputation as most Mercedes machines are wont to do. But alongside the competition, it was out of date. Developed to answer the growing need for a luxurious yet adventurous sedan, the new C180 now comes in a sportier package designed to emphasize its dynamic and progressive character. So now we've got a machine that oozes sex appeal without sacrificing an iota of the prestige; this is Marilyn Monroe with a Platinum Visa.

Drive me!

I'm looking at an obsidian black C180 Avant-Garde with sports package that dares me to open its doors. I've always been intimidated by good looks, and they don't get more attractive than a brand new Mercedes. With her sleek and spirited design, modern interpretation of the twin headlamp face, 17-inch light alloy wheels, chrome grille and distinct Tri-Star emblem, the C180 Avant-Garde feels like a blind date that is about to dump me before dinner. It's narrower than most other Mercedes models, lending it a streamlined feel, and the reduced lift on the front and rear axles establishes optimal conditions for driving stability.

The interior that comes with the sports package also emphasizes the car's youthful appeal. The front seats are specifically designed to offer perfect lateral support and excellent comfort for long rides. The anthracite-colored "Silverstone" upholstery used for both the central panels and the front and rear seats, the three-spoke steering wheel in leather, stainless steel pedals and fitted carpets, all stress the fact that this machine doesn't need a driver to look good. But this is a body with a brain as well. There are buttons for everything, a wicked gear level in leather trim for the five-speed automatic transmission, and a dashboard that looks like a seek-and-destroy torpedo screen.

More than ever before, modern technology is relieving the driver of various burdens by performing many functions automatically. With the aid of new multifunction steering wheels and "smart" displays in the speedometers, the driver can program a multitude of individual settings and command information simply by thumbing the appropriate button. Cruise control, cockpit personalization and driving mode options of either Comfort (for the cool) or Sporty (for the Coulthards), the C180 let's you tailor your fantasy. The darn thing appears to have enough platform to run for politics, and intelligent enough to reconsider.

Standard equipment of the new car includes technical innovations that were previously available only in the flagship models: window bags, adaptive airbags, halogen headlamps are just a few features that attest to Mercedes-Benz's penchant for safety as well as excellence. And everybody knows that the Germans make the sturdiest vehicles, able to withstand natural or unnatural forces. This is a car for picking up chicks in Haiti.

Low running costs

But what is aesthetics and acumen without accomplishment? With this challehge in mind, I turned on the Mercedes-Benz C180 or, should I say again, it turned me on. This is a supercharged, four-cylinder model that guarantees a performance similar to a six-cylinder car. There's a slight cough as it initially accelerates, perhaps because it's so quick off the mark (or perhaps because I am nervous), but it immediately steadies into a consistent glide. Unfortunately, I can't experience just how fast it can run, simply because Taguig is a thickly populated area. But soon enough, a hundred yards of empty road shows me.

The five-speed automatic transmission contributes greatly to the overall performance, side stepping any torque holes and allowing for fluid changes. It is also eerily quiet. It turns well, breaks like glass and handles smooth, if a bit on the heavy side. But the real strength of the C180 is its low running costs—cheaper than most first dates, thank goodness. It is good that the test drive is not Makati, because this car smokes!

A few downsides have less to do with performance than perspective. Given its narrow frame, the C180 does not accommodate that many people in the backseat—three would be snug. Then again, it doesn't look like it was designed to host the Brady Bunch. Also, the computerization aspect tends to get a little overwhelming. The average driver wants to know how fast he is running and how much gas is left in the tank—the C180 gives so much more, it is hard to imagine utilizing every single function. But I guess this is like complaining that my beautiful and sexy girlfriend also speaks Latin.

If Mercedes-Benz decided to manufacture tricycles, the company would probably win the Paris-Dakar rally. Make no mistake, this is a present-day predator honed by the heritage of the past and equipped by the technology of the future: Benz of both worlds. Welcome to the jungle, enjoy the prowl.

An Aha! moment can change your life

From page C1

own reactions to whoever is in front of them, and they have become assertive enough not to let themselves be bullied emotionally," says George.

On the other hand, if there are people who seem to be intimidating you, it means you need to shatter illusions about your self-image, self-belief and self-esteem.

Insight 6. You are already perfect, you already have all that you will ever need, and you are already completely free, and you just don't know it. Understand life's paradoxes:

- Attachment to anything that you think brings you comfort, is what makes you uncomfortable. Real comfort comes from your heart, not from anything external.
- If you want love and respect, you have to give them first but not expect anything. You may have heard this before but very few apply this. When you have self-respect, then you are both giving and receiving respect at the same time.
- You don't need to reinvent yourself to be the authentic you. You only have to become conscious of illusions and drop them.
- The more you try to control others, even in your own mind, the less impact you will have. The less you try to command, the more influence you will have.

Insight 7. Each one of us is a source of love, honesty, harmony and contentment in the world. This is what makes us all naturally rich. Relationship is actually an exchange of energy. When the interaction transmits magnanimity or is merely positive, then the relationship is congenial. However, we have been conditioned to take what we can, and to keep what we can get. If our taking is ego-driven, we become tense. In contrast, giving brings the immediate fruit of happiness. George cites two dynamics in the bank account of the spirit. One, the giver is the first to feel the energy of giving. Two, not only does it rebound, but it returns on various levels.

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DOH-BFAD Permit No: 0241 series of 2004

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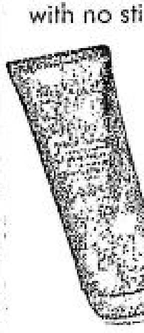

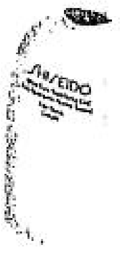

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Summer is a great time for sports at SM Supermalls, you'll never run out of sports activities to keep yourself active and interested.

Sign up for the biggest JVC Junior Badminton Championship

JUNIOR BADMINTON JVC

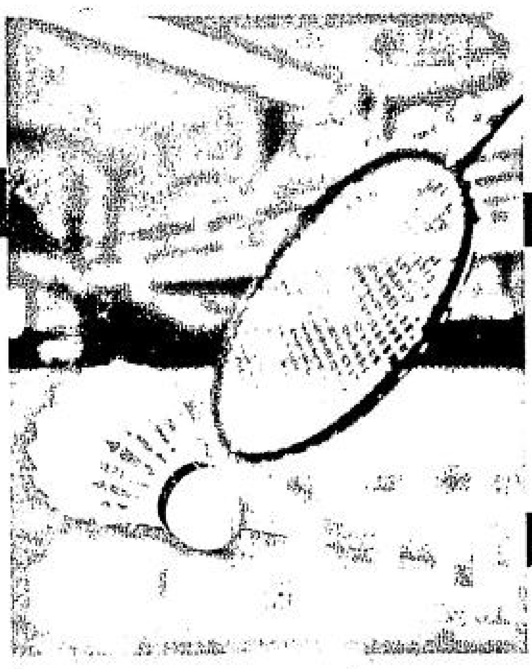
Juniors 14 and UNDER

JVC continues its commitment to badminton with the JVC Junior Badminton Championship at SM Supermalls. This summer's edition promises to be bigger and more exciting than ever before. With the boom in badminton, young enthusiasts will be delighted to know that JVC continues to give this popular sport the boost!

The category is Juniors, 14 years old and under. The events are: boys singles, girls singles, boys doubles, girls doubles, and mixed doubles. Entry fee is P100. Deadline of entries is on April 2, 2004.

Winners will have a field day enjoying big prizes including a college educational plan. This is indeed the biggest JVC Juniors event ever!

JVC is the lead sponsor, with support from Alaska, Gosen, Toby's, Accel, Philippine Star, Tokyo Tokyo, Rudy Project, Pioneer Insurance, Lactacyd and Agfa. The event is being organized by IMG, the world's biggest sports marketing company.



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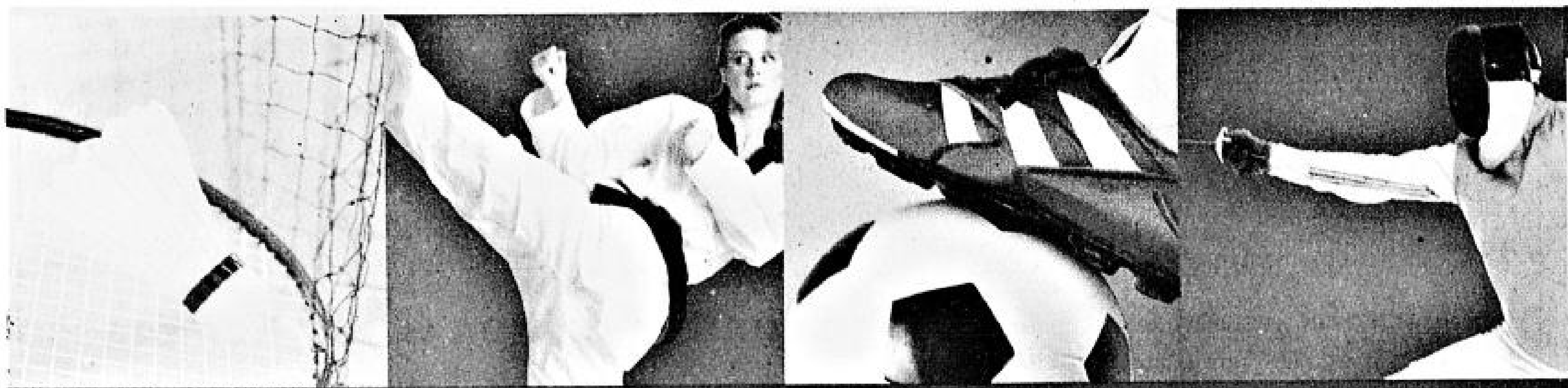
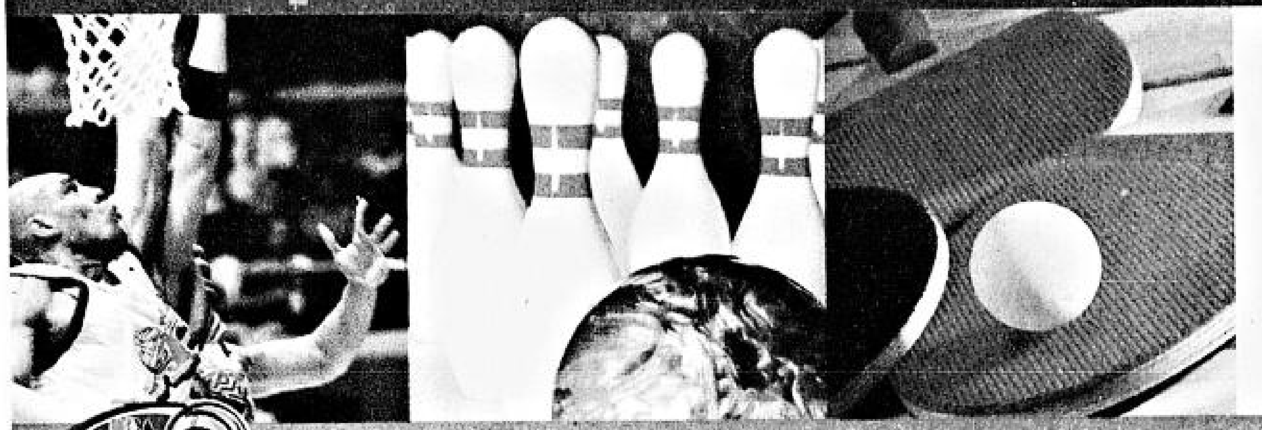


SUMMER sports



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EVENT SCHEDULES

SM City Fairview	March 22-28 **PBA Interactive**
SM City Bicutan	March 27-28 **Football**
SM City Manila	March 30-31 **Football**
SM North Edsa	March 26 **Olympic Village TECH-DECK**
	March 27-28 **JVC Badminton**
	March 29-31 **PBA Interactive**
SM Sta. Mesa	March 28 **3 on 3 Summer Sports Basketball**
	March 29 **PBA Players Meet and Greet**
SM Southmall	March 24-25 **Taekwondo**
	March 26-28 **Sportshouse Basketball**
SM City Bacoor	March 27-28 **Taekwondo**
	March 28 **AAK Super Karate**
SM City Baguio	March 29 **Polynesian Dance & Sports Exhibition**
SM City Pampanga	March 29-31 **Karate-Do Workshop**
SM City Lucena	March 23-25/28-31 **Fit for Life Taebo, Aero & Kickboxing**
	March 26-27 **Sportshouse Darts Tournament**
SM City Marilao	March 24-25 **Football**
	March 30-April 4 **PBA Interactive**
SM Cagayan De Oro	March 27-28 **Football**
	March 31-April 1 **Karate-Do Friendship Tournament**

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PHOTO GALLERY

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GIANT INFLATABLE BASKETBALL HOOP

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PBA SNAP SHOT

[illegible] 2003 Rookie of the Year Jimmy Alapag [illegible]

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PROMO PERIOD: April 1-30, 2004
DRAW DATE: May 2, 2004
DRAW VENUE: At SM Supermalls Mall Activity Area and/or at the Mall Admin. Office.
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES - April 30, 9PM

PROMO PERIOD
APRIL 1, 2004 to April 30, 2004
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1283 Series of 2004

JVC BADMINTON SCHEDULES

March	27-28	SM North Edsa	May	08-09	SM Cebu
April	03-04	SM City Baguio		15-16	SM Iloilo
	10-11	SM Megamall		22-23	SM Southmall
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SATURDAY *Special*

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Editor **Nestor U. Torre**
Assistant Editor **Rito P. Asilo**

Gibson confounds Hollywood's power brokers

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN movie icon Mel Gibson announced that he was making a film on the last 12 hours of Jesus Christ's life, he threw Hollywood for a loop.

After all, Gibson had made a name for himself as a movie star with the "Mad Max" actioners and the "Lethal Weapon" film series, and as a director with the big, brash "Braveheart." Now, this film gonzo was going to make a movie about Christ?!

After getting over their shock, movie industry veterans belatedly recalled that Gibson *did* have his sensitive side, as evinced by some of his non-action capers. In "Tim," he played a mentally handicapped man, and he starred in intense dramas like "The Year of Living Dangerously"—and "Hamlet"!

GIBSON, right, directs Jim Caviezel in "The Passion of The Christ."

Directorial debut

As a director, Gibson also had his sensitively dramatic outing in his directorial debut, "The Man Without A Face."

Still, his projected film on Christ's crucifixion was a most unexpected cinematic gambit.

His movie colleagues were even more discombobulated when they learned that Gibson fully intended to have his film's characters speak in Aramaic and Latin.

The prospect of hearing those "dead" languages would turn moviegoers off in droves! Was Gibson bent on committing cinematic suicide?

To make things worse, when Gibson asked for financing, doors slammed on his iconic face. This is a major reversal, because bigtime producers are usually eager to bankroll anything Gibson wants to make.

Big difference

What spelled the big difference? Many power brokers in Hollywood are Jews, and they wanted no part of a production that could put their faith in a bad light.

So, Gibson was compelled to finance the entire production himself, to the tune of some $25 million. He could do no less because he had been planning to make the film for more than 10 years.

The impulse to direct a film about Jesus' passion sprang from Gibson's own dark night of the soul 12 years ago, after a spiritual crisis forced him to reexamine his own faith.

Out of the dregs of this crisis came the grace that prompted him to honor his Savior with a film that would remind chronically forgetful modern man about Jesus' awesome sacrifice for the redemption of the world.

Unique opportunity

As an observer so felicitously puts it, Gibson "realized he now had a unique opportunity to put his art where his heart resided."

Early on, the filmmaker was rapped for stressing the pain of the Passion, rather than the consequent edification of the Resurrection. He explained, "I wanted to express the hugeness of His sacrifice, as well as the horror of it. Ultimately, however, it should be seen as a story of faith, hope and love."

The film's overwhelming reception indicates that this goal has been achieved, and more. And Gibson feels vindicated in his own faith in the enduring vitality and relevance of Christ's supreme sacrifice.

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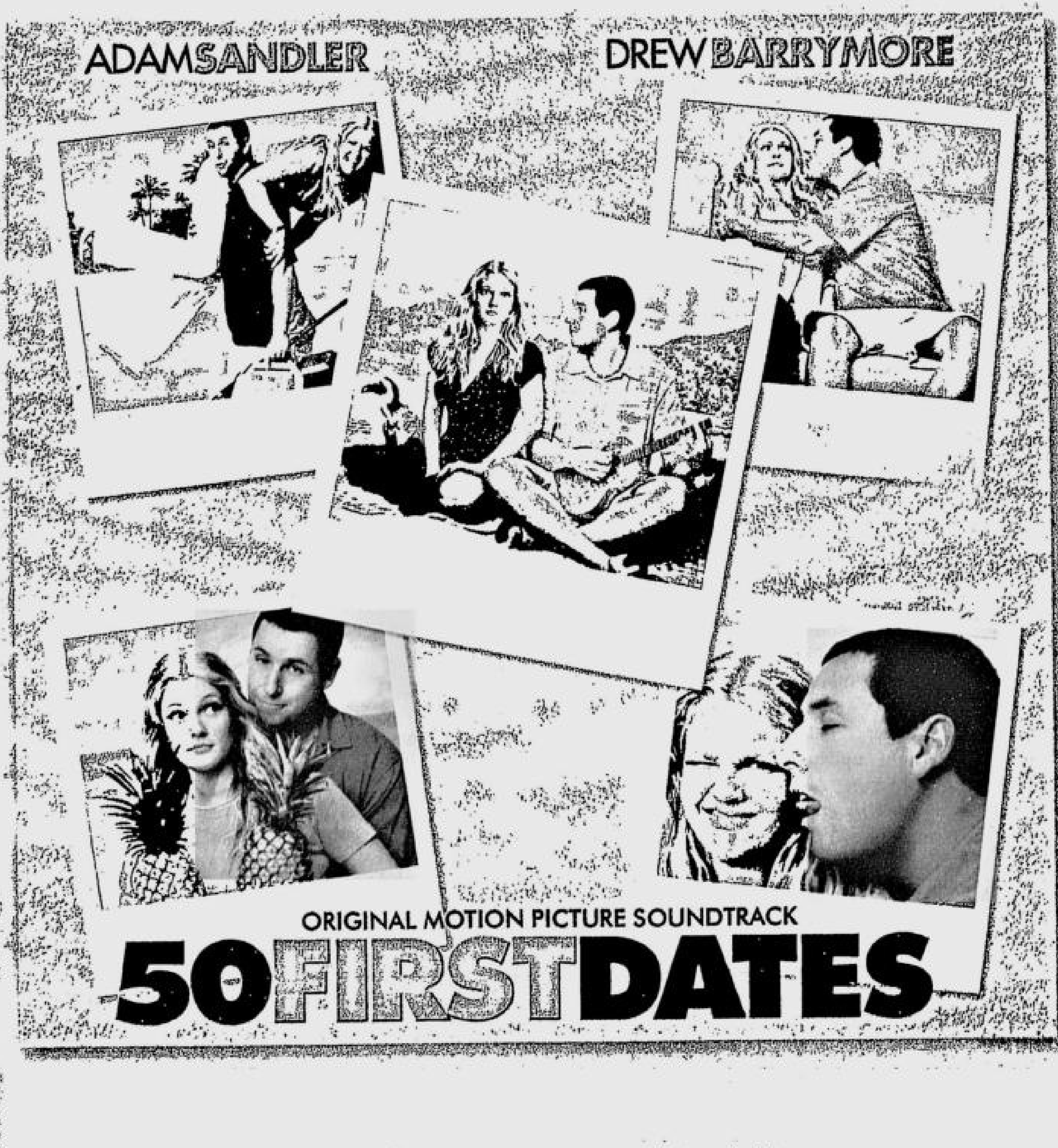

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Drive	N125	T125	LY125
Slave To Love	N126	T126	LY126
Every Breath You Take	N127	T127	LY127
Ghost In You	N128	T128	LY128
Friday I'm In Love	N129	T129	LY129
Breakfast In Bed	N130	T130	LY130
I Melt With You	N131	T131	LY131
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Insane for Incubus!

Photos By: Joy Serrano, Tonnette Jacinto & Arnold Chung

Ben Kenney, bass guitar

Mike Einzinger, lead guitar

Jose Pasillas, drums

Chris Kilmore, DJ

Brandon Boyd, vocals

SMART Buddy Brings Rock Back to Manila

When rock icons perform, you stand up, you listen, then you headbang! This was exactly the case when Incubus brought their brand of power rock to Manila. From the moment the first few notes to "Megalomaniac" emanated from the stage, the thousands gathered at the CCP Open Grounds knew they were in for a rocking good time.

SMART Buddy played a major role in bringing the quintet of vocalist Brandon Boyd, lead guitarist Mike Einzinger, drummer Jose Pasillas, bassist Ben Kenney and DJ Chris Kilmore to our shores. It's not everyday that a major force in modern rock arrives in the Philippines, and the audience made sure to let Incubus know their performance was greatly appreciated.

Aside from performing cuts from their latest album *A Crow Left of the Murder* like "Pistola" and "Talk Shows on Mute", Incubus made sure to give the crowd what it wanted, namely the hits that made them so popular. Thus, hits like "Drive", "Warning", and "Wish You Were Here" drew enormous responses from everyone who packed the venue. The band that began in Calabasas, California showcased the breadth of their musical influences, ranging from old school metal, funk, hip-hop, jazz, and even some R&B.

A SMART Buddy cap, a JAG-Murder bag, and free Incubus concert tickets were available for new SMART Buddy subscribers who purchased the SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM 2 at JAG stores in Glorietta, Robinson's Place Manila or Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall. Picking the concert ticket automatically entered them into the "Meet and Greet Incubus" raffle, putting them face to face with the rock icons themselves.

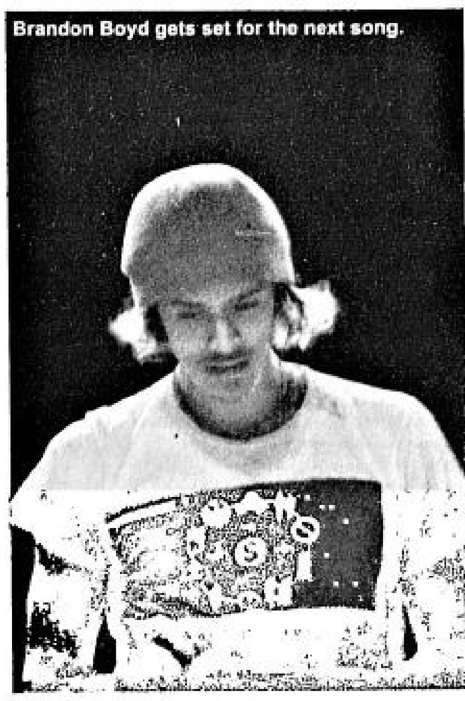
SMART Buddy subscribers are in for a treat. You can download exclusive Incubus tones, logos, picture messages, colored wallpapers, karaoke lyrics, spotlight updates, and calendar logos! You can still win an autographed copy of lead singer Brandon Boyd's book *White Fluffy Clouds*, or even P25,000 in cash! Just text INCUBUS and send to 209 to participate in the Incubus Download promo until March 28, 2004.

With Incubus' performance at the CCP Open Grounds, we finally saw the return of world-class rock to Manila. Even as the final strains of "Are you In" and "Pardon Me" played into the cold March night, everybody who watched were thankful for this opportunity to watch Incubus in action. When next we see a rock act come over to the Philippines, you can be sure that SMART Buddy will be there to cater to your headbanging pleasures once again.

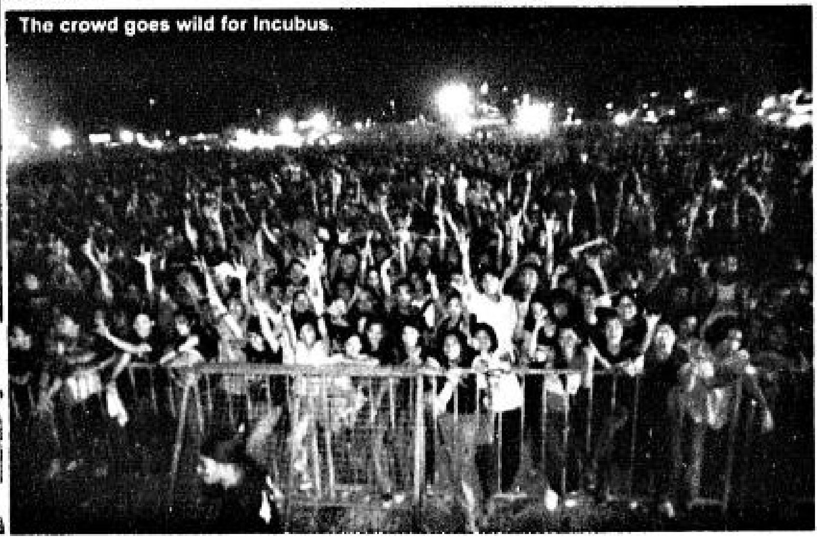
Chynna Ortaleza gets ready to rock

Ira Cruz, Izza Calzado & Epi Quizon were spotted at the event.

Brandon Boyd gets set for the next song.



The crowd goes wild for Incubus.



The quintet received gift packs from SMART Buddy.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

The chambermaid and the dreamer

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

FROM *Paul Galera*: **"I am a big fan of Nelly Furtado and Joss Stone. Please tell me more about them and their new albums."**

Their musical genres may be different, but Nelly Furtado (pop rock) and Joss Stone (soul) have a lot in common: youth, distinctive voices, and the drive to succeed.

For eight summers, Canadian-Portuguese Nelly Furtado, 25, worked as a chambermaid beside her housekeeper mom.

She spent her leisure time learning the guitar and ukulele, and grew up influenced by a fusion of musical styles (TLC, Mariah Carey, U2, Oasis, Radiohead, Digable Planets, Brazilian pop), before she recorded an impressive demo that convinced Dreamworks to sign her up—thus, the groundbreaking, Grammy-winning "Whoa, Nelly!," which featured the chart-topping "I'm Like A Bird," was born.

Furtado's second album, "Folklore," came barely two months after she became a mother for the first time—which may explain the album's more mature sound.

Inherent quality

But while her adventurous musicality is muted here, it is still this inherent quality in her music, plus her charming, evocative vocals, that keep the sophomore offering fresh, innovative and audacious.

The hooks sometimes overpower lyrical content, but the delectable fusion of elements ("One-Track Pony," with the Kronos Quartet; "Island of Wonder," with Caetano Veloso, and the radio-friendly "Powerless") makes the collection a must-hear for fans of good music.

Distinctive voice

We first heard Joss Stone's distinctive voice during commercial breaks at the recent Grammy telecast in promotional TV ads.

Later, we were surprised to learn that the girl with the rich, big, husky voice that combined the power and timbre of Aretha Franklin and Lisa Stansfield was British—and only 17!

She started dreaming of pop stardom in the Britney Spears-Christina Aguilera mold, but she soon realized that she wanted more than the bubblegum popularity that the two singers enjoyed.

She packed her bags, left England, flew to New York, auditioned for a record executive with her rendition of Donna Summer's disco classic, "On the Radio"—and landed a deal!

FURTADO. More mature sound.

STONE. Wise beyond her years.

Covers

In her debut album, "The Soul Sessions," Stone takes the soul genre back to mainstream pop music with fresh, provocative interpretations. Her covers of Aretha Franklin's "All The King's Horses," Harlan Howard's "The Chokin' Kind" and Betty Wright's "Dirty Man" demonstrate how a powerful singer can put a personal stamp and an unusual emotional stake on previously recorded songs.

Our favorites: her funky reworking of the White Stripes' "Fell in Love with a Boy" and the dressed-down but powerfully sung Isley Brothers classic, "For the Love of You." Her voice sounds wise beyond her years—and it doesn't hurt that she's also easy on the eyes!

VDay and NVC Summer Workshop

Join New Voice as it celebrates VDay with a benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues," featuring 50 women (including Gina Alajar, Angel Aquino, Rina Jimenez David) at the Republic of Malate today at 9 p.m.

Also, NVC's summer workshops for kids, teens and adults will run from April 1 to May 31. All instructors have studied at prestigious professional acting schools abroad. Call 896-5497 or 0918 930-3372.

New playwrights to be developed in CCP workshop

By Andy Bais

PROMISING new writers are signing up for the CCP's Playwright Development Initiative this summer because it gives them a chance to really learn their craft within the necessary context of the entire play production process.

They welcome the fact that the workshop will not only encourage them to write better scripts, but will also enable them to interact with directors and actors as their plays are being rehearsed, and with the audience when their works are staged.

Thus, the three-week initiative promises to be a busy but fulfilling workshop for the 20 playwrights who will be admitted into it, after they each submit a sample one-act play to the CCP's Performing Arts Department (tel. 832-3415), or call Jeanne Lim at 416-3479 or (0919) 333-8386.

DEL MUNDO. Wrote the script of "Maynila, Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag" in Torre's writing class.

Extensive experience

Playwrights are heartened by the fact that the comprehensive workshop will be handled by Nestor U. Torre, who has had extensive experience in many aspects of theater.

As a playwright, Torre set a record in the prestigious Palanca Awards for Literature when he won six awards in six consecutive years, four of them first prizes.

Torre's scripts were so outstanding that Peta produced three of them. Significantly, one of them, "Out of Darkness," was the first play directed by Lino Brocka.

Torre went on to be hailed as the lone prizewinner in Peta's Full-length Historical Playwriting Contest. His winning entry, "The Swallow in Its Summer," was mounted several times by Peta, with Dindo Fernando and Rosemarie Gil among its stars.

Screenplays

The acclaimed playwright, who also became an actor and director of note, went on to write many outstanding stage plays in Filipino, including "Magsimula Ka," "Magnificat," "Nasaan si Hesus" and "Padre Pio." He wrote a total of 20 screenplays for directors like Ishmael Bernal, Chat Gallardo, and Romy Suzara.

Torre also wrote scripts for many TV programs. One of them, "Mr. Minister," won as Best TV show at the CCMM Awards.

Indeed, Torre has won more than his share of writing awards. And, since 1996, he has been helping many other writers win in national scriptwriting competitions, after taking his annual writing workshops for the Film Development Council of the Philippines.

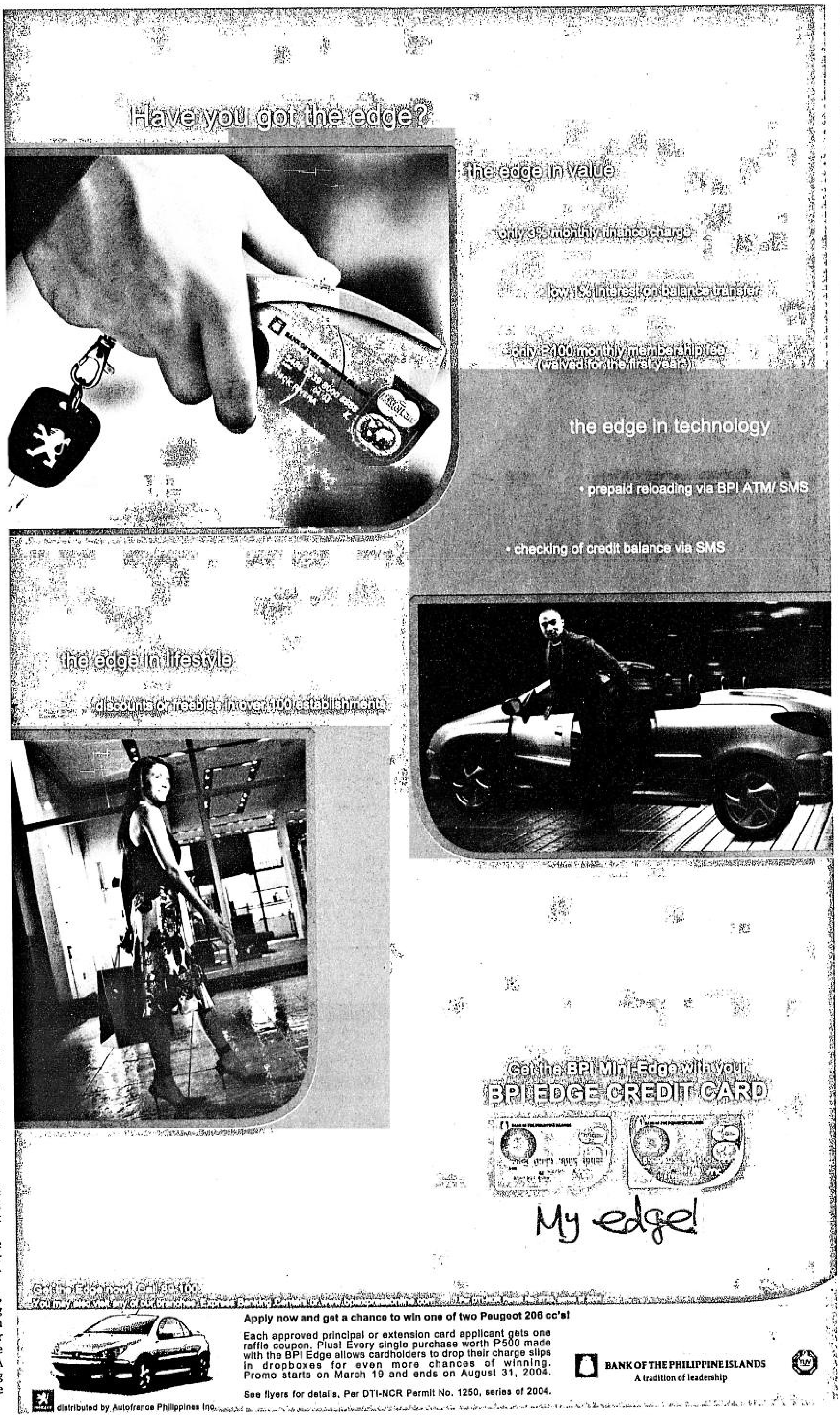
Some of his prizewinning workshoppers include Michiko Yamamoto, writer of Maryo delos Reyes' "Magnifico"; Adolf Alix, Jr., writer of Gil Portes' "Munting Tinig," and Jerry Gracio, writer of Laurice Guillen's next film, "Santa Santita."

Writing class

In addition, Clodualdo del Mundo Jr. wrote his script for Lino Brocka's "Maynila, Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag" in Torre's writing class at the Ateneo de Manila Graduate School.

Through the years, Torre has made a name for himself as an outstanding writing teacher who takes a personal interest in young writers' progress.

With his CCP workshop this summer, he takes the extra step of also mounting workshoppers' scripts and having them commented on by viewers, to further enrich his students' appreciation of the nature and value of their work. —A golden opportunity for developing playwrights who really want to write better scripts!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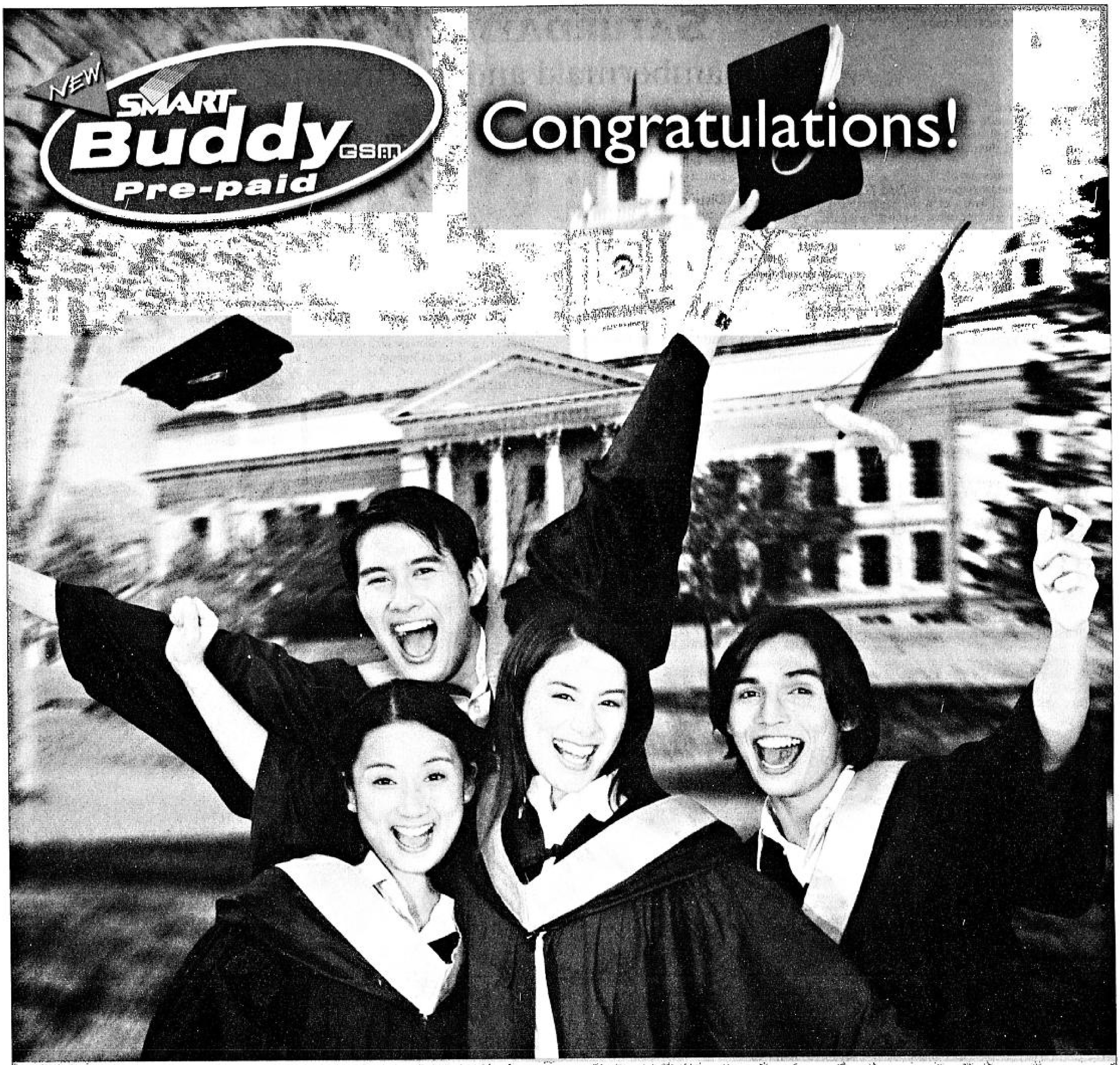

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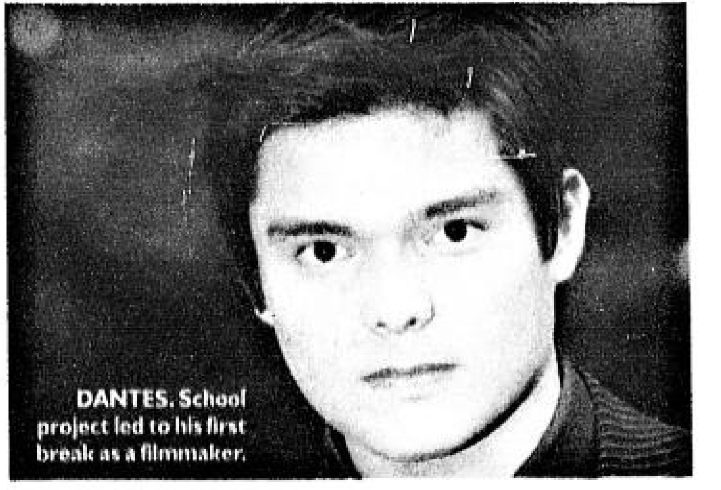
Directing gives Dingdong Dantes a different kind of high


DANTES. School project led to his first break as a filmmaker.

By Jocelyn Valle

WHEN Dingdong Dantes joined the all-male dance group, Abstract, in 1996, he never thought that it would lead to his becoming an actor.

But he soon found himself in the teen program, "TGIS," playing its resident cool dude, Iñaki, and then in movies that featured his onscreen tandem with Antoinette Taus.

Now, at 23, Dingdong is one of the busiest young performers in the biz. He plays the male lead role of Adrian in Channel 7's nightly soap, "Twin Hearts."

He co-hosts the musical-variety show, "SOP," where he gets to showcase his dancing and singing skills.

Impressive resumé

Recently, he has added directing to his already impressive resumé. He calls the shots on the horror-comedy series, "Kakaba Adventures."

"Directing is my passion," Dingdong nods. "But I'd also like to stay long in the business as an actor. I don't mind the matinee idol label. It's the work that I love most."

He still enjoys being in a love team. "Twin Hearts" is his second team-up with Tanya Garcia after the success of their first soap, "Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga." He shares that he has a wonderful working relationship with Tanya because they are both professionals. They don't bring personal problems to the set. When one of them is in a bad mood, the other adjusts.

"I like hosting," says Dingdong. "My childhood dream was to be a lawyer, that's why I initially took up Philosophy at San Beda. Eventually, I shifted to Interdisciplinary Studies at the Ateneo."

Challenge

Balancing studies and career has been a challenge for Dingdong. Last semester, he decided not to enroll because of his hectic schedule. But this coming school year, he promises to go back to school. "I still have two years to go," he smiles.

Dingdong points out that show biz and education can be compatible. The hands-on training he gets from the movies and TV gives him a practical approach to the theories he learns in class.

Recently, he completed a school project—a short film for which he recruited Tanya and his friend, Gabby Eigenmann, to play the leads.

"It's titled 'Harana,'" he says. "It's about a guy who's madly in love with a girl. When she fails to return his feelings, he begins to show his schizophrenic nature. It's very dark. I'm into suspense thrillers."

The short film was Dingdong's ticket to directing, after he submitted a demo copy to the producers of "Kakaba."

Now Showing

By Rito P. Asilo

STARTING this issue, we're providing capsule reviews of current films, to help readers choose which movies to view. This week's choices:

'Highwaymen'
D: Robert Harmon
Cast: Jim Caviezel, Colm Feore

CAVIEZEL. Plays a distraught husband out for revenge in "Highwaymen."

Jim Caviezel portrays a man out to avenge the death of his wife in Harmon's "road movie with a serial killer" thriller. In a cat-and-mouse battle of wits, the distraught husband pursues the wheelchair-bound psychopath (Feore) who killed his wife five years earlier.

Obvious illogical lapses have to be overlooked to fully enjoy the cheap but sometimes engaging thrills this movie offers. This is no "Joy Ride," but if you are willing to suspend disbelief—a must for thriller buffs—a fun time can be had indulging in "Highwaymen's" effectively scary twists and turns.

'Wisegirls'
D: David Anspaugh
Casts: Mira Sorvino, Mariah Carey, Melora Walters

Don't be scared, "Wisegirls" is not one of Mariah's excruciatingly self-indulgent films. It is surprisingly good, if a bit odd. The low-key Mafia chick flick even features a good performance from Carey as a brassy, tough-talking waitress. The movie is about a

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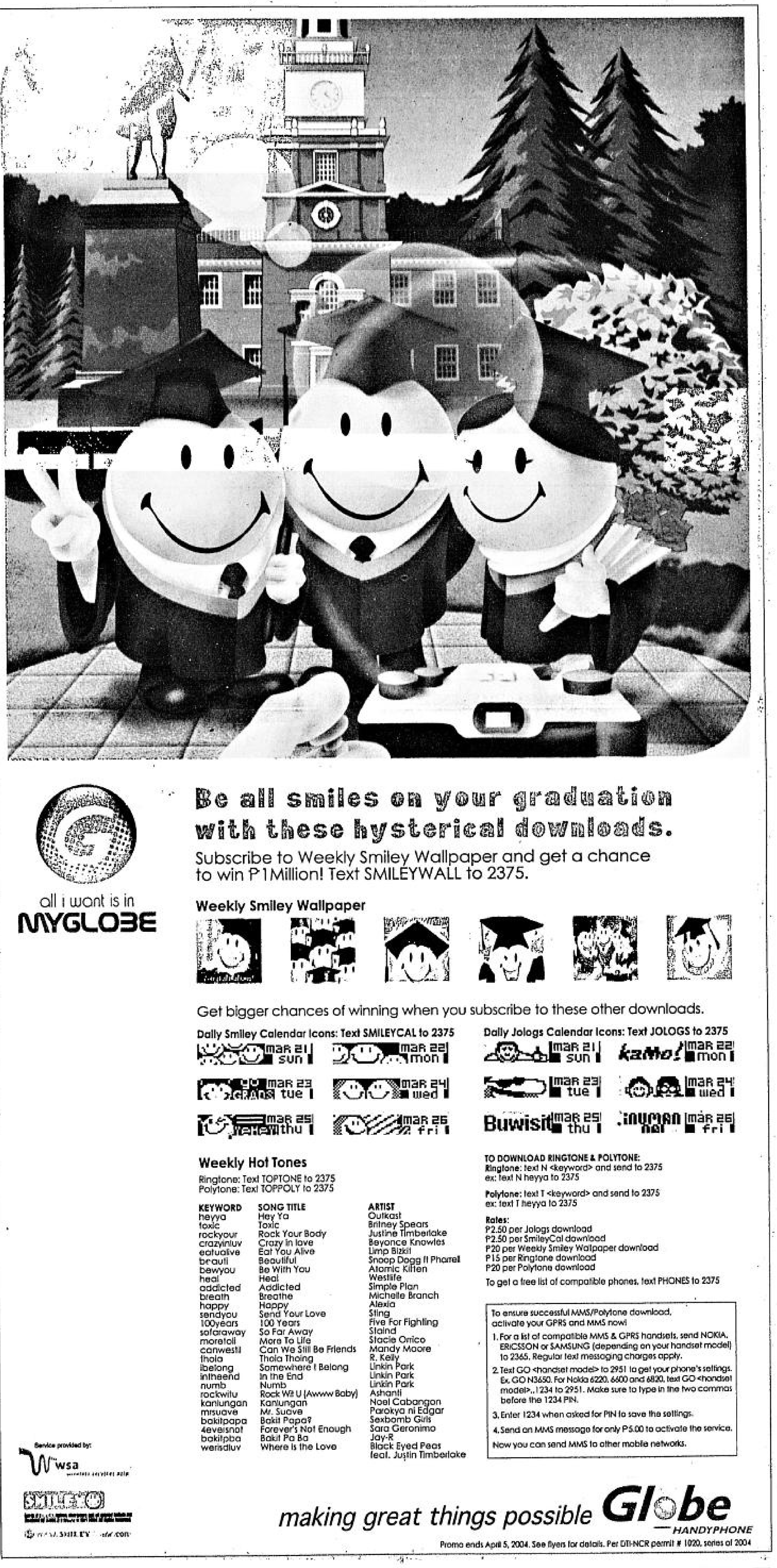
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toxic	Toxic	Britney Spears
rockyour	Rock Your Body	Justine Timberlake
crazyinluv	Crazy in love	Beyonce Knowles
eatualive	Eat You Alive	Limp Bizkit
beauti	Beautiful	Snoop Dogg ft Pharell
bewyou	Be With You	Atomic Kitten
heal	Heal	Westlife
addicted	Addicted	Simple Plan
breath	Breathe	Michelle Branch
happy	Happy	Alexia
sendyou	Send Your Love	Sting
100years	100 Years	Five For Fighting
sofaraway	So Far Away	Staind
moretoli	More To Life	Stacie Orrico
canwestil	Can We Still Be Friends	Mandy Moore
thola	Thola Thoing	R. Kelly
ibelong	Somewhere I Belong	Linkin Park
intheend	In the End	Linkin Park
numb	Numb	Linkin Park
rockwitu	Rock Wit U (Awww Baby)	Ashanti
kanlungan	Kanlungan	Noel Cabangon
mrsuave	Mr. Suave	Parokya ni Edgar
bakitpapa	Bakit Papa?	Sexbomb Girls
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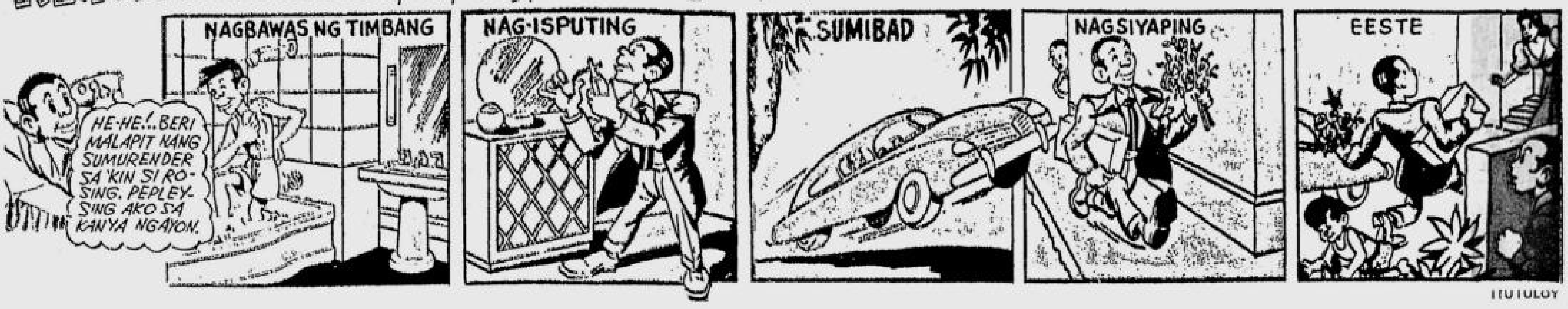
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YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM MARCH 27 - APRIL 2

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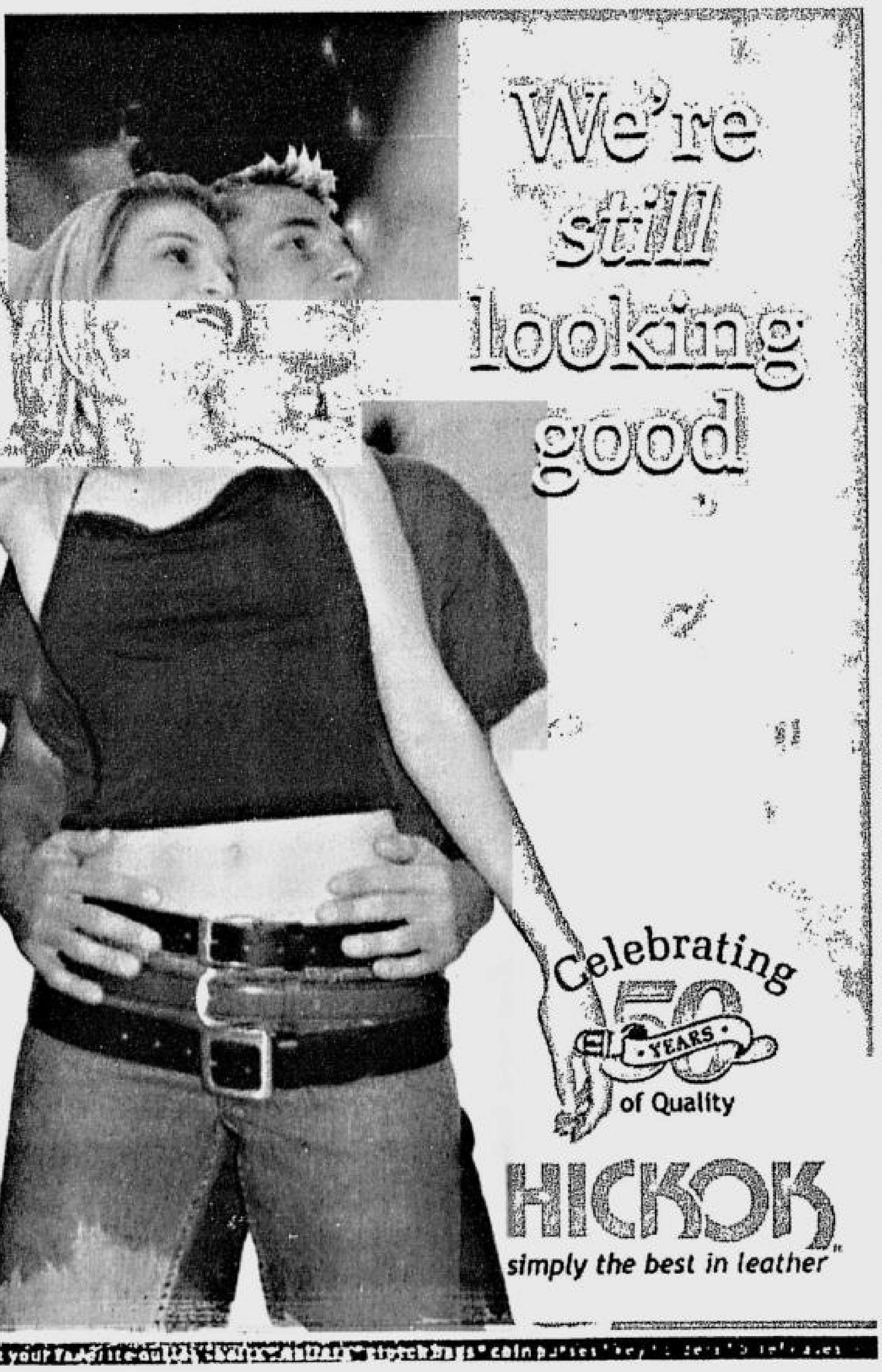

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Christie inherited her mother's singing genes, and has recorded two singles composed by Rey Valera.

Strong empathy

Today, Christie is the vice president for operations and director of the training center of her family-owned agency. Her strong empathy for her talents eventually earned her the presidency of the Philippine Entertainment Exporters and Promoters Association and the presidency of Calea, (Confederate Associations of Licensed

UPHOLDING/ E3

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Now Showing

From page E1

woman (Sorvino) who takes on a waitressing job in an Italian restaurant.

After witnessing a crime, she finds herself slowly getting sucked into the restaurant's mob connections. "Wisegirls" effectively fuses comedy and melodrama.

'Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed'
D: Raja Gosnell

The Mystery, Inc's gang of Fred, Daphne, Velma, Shaggy and Scooby returns to foil a masked villain's plan to reproduce some of the group's classic foes by using the Monster Machine.

If the first movie was slightly amusing, this sequel isn't even close. —Which is a pity, because it has a likable cast.

BARRYMORE. Surprisingly delightful starrer.

'Death Curse'
D: Pou-Soi Cheang

How do you make an Asian horror comedy that works? Is it possible to combine comedy and horror? This Hong Kong hit shows how—commercially, at least. After the creepy but repetitive Asian horror schlockfest, this whodunit—about the children of a dead man who vanish one by one—is a breath of fresh air.

Pou-Soi Chang's movie is technically a notch above many films of this genre. The story sometimes works (although some jokes come off as inane and flat). At least, its actors don't look like they are taking this film too seriously. You shouldn't, too.

Still in theaters: Ashton Kutcher shows off his dramatic chops in Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber's **"The Butterfly Effect,"** and the surprisingly delightful Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore starrer, **"50 First Dates."**

Upholding

From page E2

Entertainment Agencies), its umbrella group.

"People focus only on the negative issues. The *japayuki* stigma could be one reason why we are having a hard time dealing with the government," laments Christie.

"We should be doing projects that are developmental—like putting up scholarships for, people. Instead, we are preoccupied in dealing with accreditation," Christie sighs.

Photoworkshop

Our Summer Photoworkshop will run from April 3 to May 29. Lectures will be held every Saturday, 2 to 5 p.m. Registration is ongoing at the Mandy Navasero PhotoPro Studio at Rm. 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia st., Bel-Air II, Makati City. Call 899-1767, or e-mail mandynavaseropro@yahoo.com.

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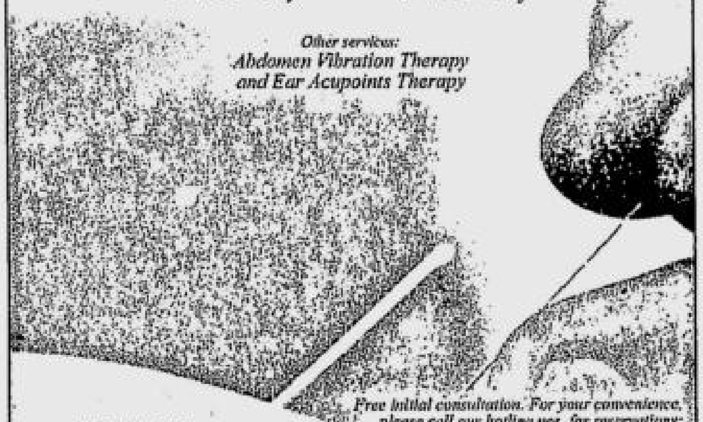

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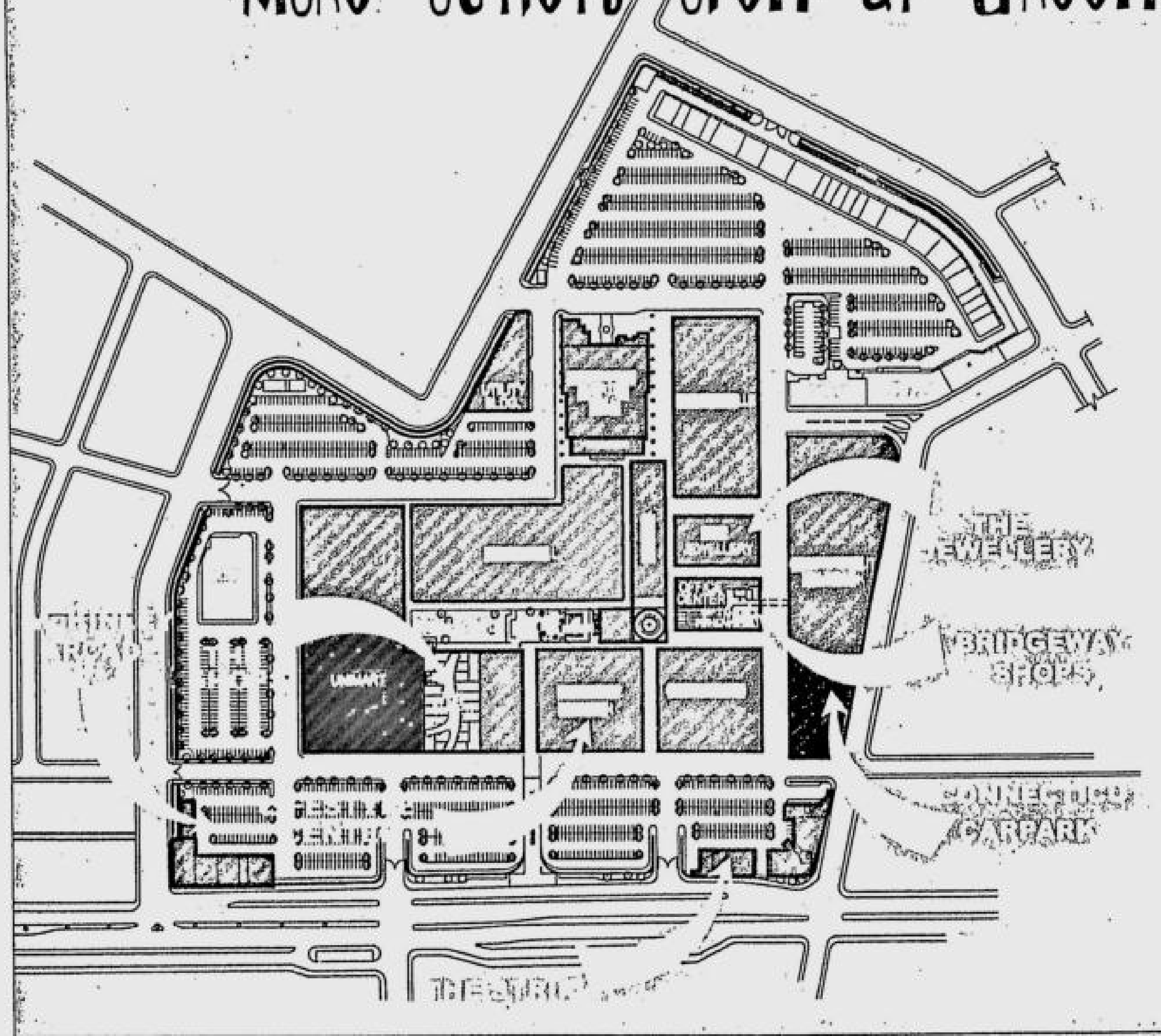

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Discovering future child stars

By Nestor U. Torre

SEGUERRA. Found fame after joining "Little Miss Philippines" competition.

SOME weeks back, Channel 2's "Star Circle Quest" started looking for both child and teen talents. More recently, it was Channel 7's "Star-struck's" turn to launch its kiddie talent search. How well are the two channels faring in their mission to discover future child stars?

Both channels auditioned thousands of children before coming up with their likeliest bets. As of last week, "Quest" had pared its finalists down to 20. For its part, on its very first talecast last March 20, "Star-struck Kids" came up with its "14K," seven boys and seven girls who will go on to compete for the final two slots.

More varied roster

Thus, "Star-struck" is moving at a brisker pace than "Quest." But, will it come up with better child performers? The jury is still out on that one, but what appears to be clear at this stage is that "Star-struck" has come up with a more varied roster of finalists.

True to Philippine show biz tradition, "Quest" generally favors *mestizos* with foreign surnames. On the other hand, "Star-struck" has a wider range of racial types.

In fact, one of its final 14 is a girl who looks and sounds a lot like Aiza Seguerra when she was a tyke competing on "Eat Bulaga's" "Little Miss Philippines" kiddie competition.

Interestingly enough, Aiza, now all grown up, is one of the judges on "Star-struck Kids." Will her little lookalike do as well as Aiza has? We'll have to wait and see, but we should point out that Aiza wasn't the top winner of the "Little Miss Philippines" tilt, and became popular only after she appeared daily on "Eat Bulaga" as its youngest segment host.

Like Aiza, Sam is pert and chatty, but she may have to contend with the preference for *mestizo* types in these parts, especially since half of a contestant's score will be coming from televiewers' text votes.

Gentle way

One thing we like about "Star-struck Kids" is the gentle way it handled the children who were eliminated from contention. Unlike other searches where rejected contestants are bluntly told of their sad fate, "Star-struck" informed only their parents, who then had to think of the best way to let their children know that they had been eliminated.

But the show goofed when it featured the Sex Bomb Dancers as guest performers before the final "14K" were announced. Sexy dancers have no place in a TV search for talents aged from only five to seven years.

How to live properly

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

(Conclusion)

OTHER people considered impious and sinful in the Shrimad Bhagavatam:

11. A person who, after receiving food, does not provide it for guests, old men and children.

12. A person who robs a saintly person, or anyone else, of his wealth.

13. A person who indulges in sex indiscriminately—even with animals.

14. A person who is born into a responsible family but neglects to execute his prescribed duties according to religious principles.

15. A person who is proud of his eminent position, and who heedlessly sacrifices animals for material prestige.

16. A person who lies while transacting business or giving to charity.

17. A person who becomes falsely proud, thinking, "I am great."

18. A person who is very proud of his wealth.

These persons may obtain power or wealth, but they will never be happy or peaceful.

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POP SONGS	ID NO.
A WOMAN'S WORTH	100239
BENT	100240
COME AWAY WITH ME	100241
DESERT ROSE	100242
GET BUSY	100243
GO DEEP	100244
HOW DO I LIVE	100245
I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING	100246
I TURN TO YOU	100247
I'M A SLAVE 4 U	100248
IRIS	100249
IT WASN'T ME	100250
JUST LIKE A PILL	100251
NICE TO KNOW YOU	100252
STUTTER	100253
SUPERMAN	100254
TEENAGE DIRTBAG	100255
THE HARDEST THING	100256
THERE YOU'LL BE	100257
TOGETHER AGAIN	100258
UNBREAK MY HEART	100259
YOU WERE MEANT FOR ME	100260

OPM

ANDREW E.	ID NO.
Sinabmarin	100219
DEVOTION	**ID NO.**
So Wonderful	100220
DONNA CRUZ	**ID NO.**
Habang May Buhay	100221
Kadenang Bulaklak	100222
GLADYS & THE BOXERS	**ID NO.**
Sasakyan Kita	100223
LANI MISALUCHA	**ID NO.**
Tila	100224
MARK BAUTISTA	**ID NO.**
Baliw	100225
OGIE ALCASID	**ID NO.**
A Better Man	100226
Ikaw Sana	100227
Sa Puso Ko	100228
Sana	100229
Sana Bukas Mahal Mo Na Ako	100230
POPS FERNANDEZ	**ID NO.**
Kaya Pala	100231
REGINE VELASQUEZ	**ID NO.**
Sa Piling Mo	100232
To Reach You	100233
SALBAKUTA	**ID NO.**
Jumbo Day	100234
Long Distance	100235
S2pid Luv	100236
Ubos Na Ang Pasensiya	100237
WENCY CORNEJO	**ID NO.**
Magpakailanman	100238

INSTRUMENTALS	ID NO.
COMEDY-07-DRUM HIT	100261
COMEDY-09-GOOD TIME	100262
COMEDY-12-JAZZY	100263
COMEDY-13-JUMPING BEAN	100264
COMEDY-14-KAZOO ACCENT	100265
DANCE-04-ENERGETIC	100266
DANCE-05-FUNKY GROOVE	100267
DANCE-06-HIP GROOVE	100268
ELECTRONICA-01-DARK	100269
JAZZ-06-BREEZY	100270
JAZZ-07-BUBBLY	100271
JAZZ-08-CLASSY	100272
TRAVEL-10-LITTLE ITALY	100273
TRAVEL-14-SPAIN MATADOR	100274
TRAVEL-15-SPAIN SUN COAST	100275

MOVIE LINES	ID NO.
BUKAS LULUHOD ANG MGA TALA	100276
HINDI KO KAYO UURUNGAN	100277
IBALIK MO SA AKIN SI JUN JUN	100278
IKAW ANG MAY UTANG SAKIN	100279
KAYA KITANG BILHIN	100280
MANGISAY KA SA INGGIT	100281
MAY ASAWA NA YANG KASAMA MO	100282
PARA KANG KARINDERYA	100283
QUERIDA KA LANG	100284
SA MGA TAONG SUMASAMBA SA PISO	100285

JOKES	ID NO.
BAD TRIP PARE	100286
BOLPEN & TIGER	100287
FERNANDO	100288
KAHOY & KESO	100289
KOTSE & CHALK	100290
KUTCHARA	100291
MAGHIWALAY NA TAYO	100292
NAAKSIDENTE	100293
NANGANGAGAT & OCHO	100294
NATIONAL HERO	100295

INDIE

Itchyworms	ID NO.
BUWAN (Acoustic Uso Version)	100297
BUWAN	100298
ILLUSIONS	100299
acid42	**ID NO.**
african_g-strang	100300
bugaboo	100301
country_fried_chikiting	100302
dancing_monk	100303
groovyjames_the_majodromo	100304
heads_will_roll_and_rock	100305
pulsing_pulsing_123	100306
sexy_bellydancer	100307
tribal_afro_loopistic	100309

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SATURDAY Special

"MAGNIFICO." Big winner.

Michiko Yamamoto scores with 'Magnifico'

YAMAMOTO. Inspired by her ailing grandmother.

By Andy Bais

SOME scriptwriters are lucky. While others have to endure painful rejection and wait for years before their "masterpieces" are turned into films, Michiko Yamamoto achieved that feat with her second script, "Magnifico Magikero," which was retitled "Magnifico."

And "Magnifico" is not just any ordinary film. Though not commercially successful, foreign and local critics are heaping praises on the movie about a young boy whose goodness survives the harshness of human nature and poverty.

Best picture

The film, directed by Maryo J. de los Reyes, won best picture at the Kinderfest or children's portion of this year's Berlin Film Festival.

It also garnered the most number of awards at the recent Star Awards, including best story for Michiko. It is also expected to figure prominently in other local awards derbies.

"Magnifico" was Michiko's entry to the 2000 Film Development Foundation scriptwriting competition, where it was adjudged the top winner. "*Direk* Maryo J was one of the judges and he expressed interest in my script after I received my award. *Hindi ko inisip na* something would come out of it *kasi hindi naman siya pang*-commercial film. Of course, I was pleasantly surprised when he informed me *na gagawin na siyang* film," Michiko recalls.

Math graduate

The 24-year-old BS Math graduate from UST knew nothing about writing scripts until she attended the FDFI scriptwriting workshop. "*Mahilig lang akong sumulat ng tula* since I was a child, and I was always assigned to write scripts *sa mga* school plays *namin. Natutunan ko lang kung papaano talaga sumulat sa* workshop," she relates.

"Magnifico" was inspired by her ailing grandmother, who passed away a week after she received the FPFI award. "I wrote the script in one day *at talagang muntik na akong di umabot sa* deadline. But I had thought about the story for months, *kaya ganun kabilis ko siyang nasulat,*" she explains.

"*Siyempre, masaya ako,* " is how Michiko describes her recent triumphs as a scriptwriter. But nothing beats her sense of fulfillment and happiness when she watched 'Magnifico' for the first time onscreen: "*Iba talaga ang nararamdaman mo kapag naririnig mo ang* reaction *ng mga nanonood.* After the screening, I went to the ladies' room *para makarinig ng iba pang* comments. *Yung iba, pulang-pula at namamaga ang mata sa kaiiyak.*"

MICHIKO/ F3

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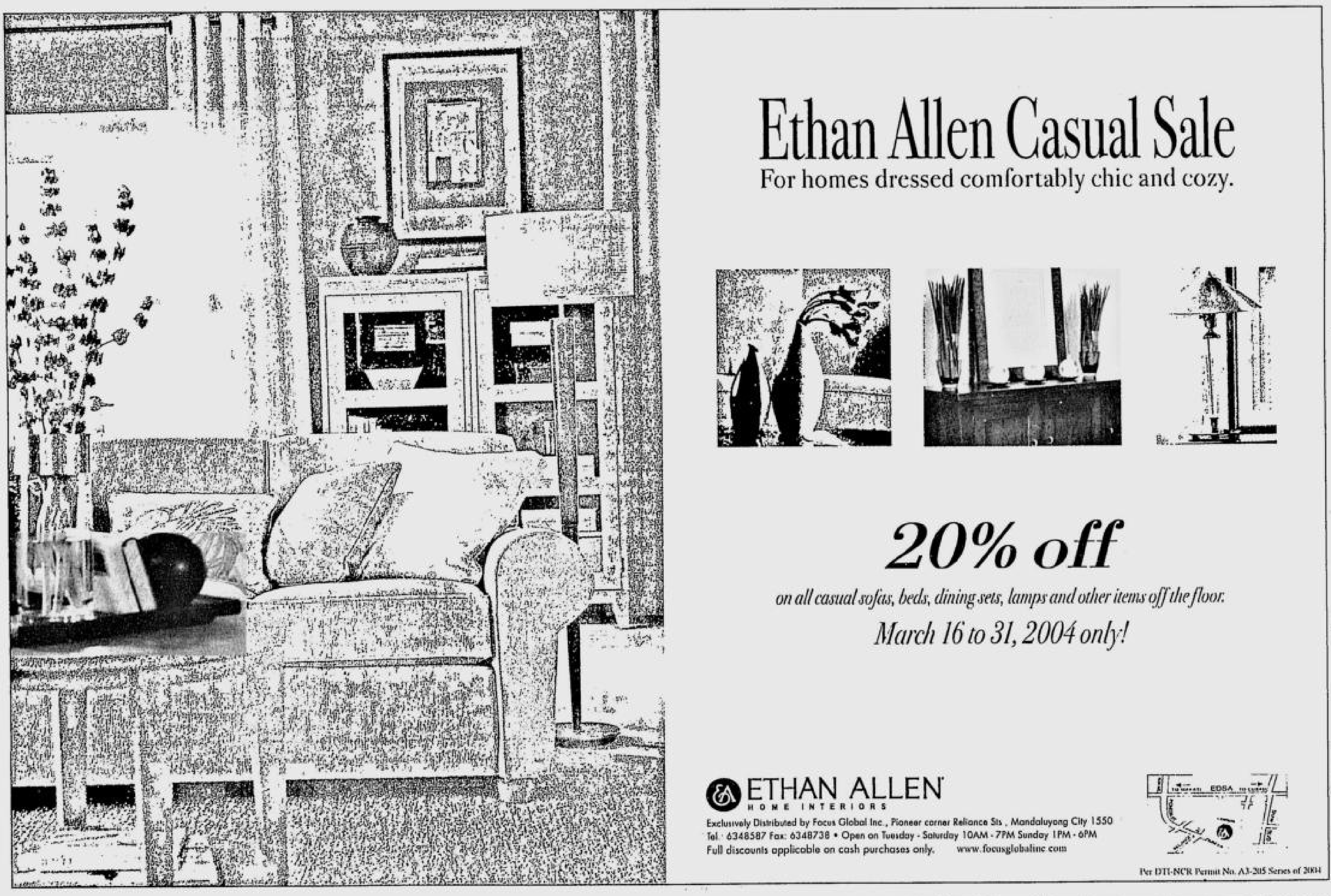

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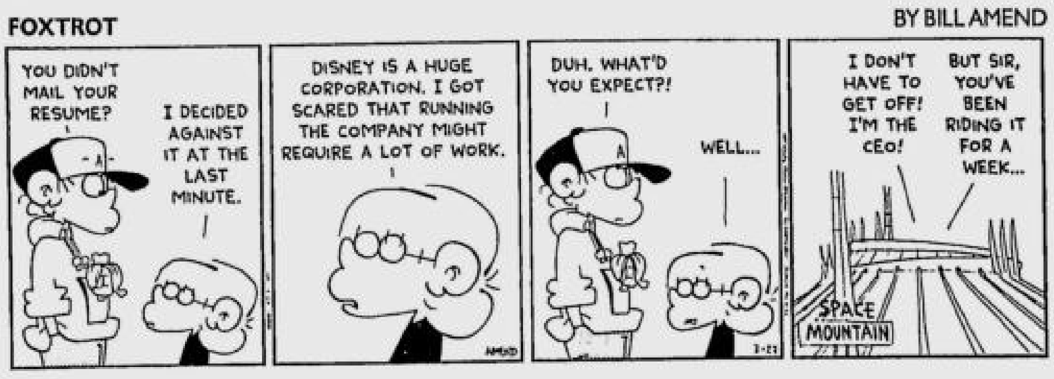
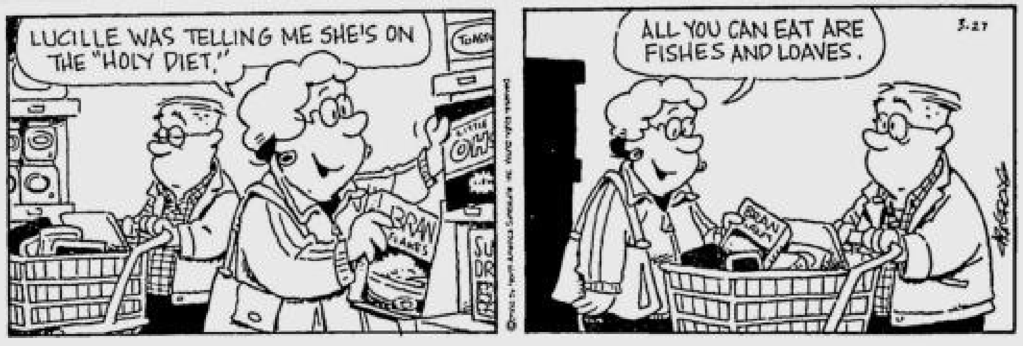
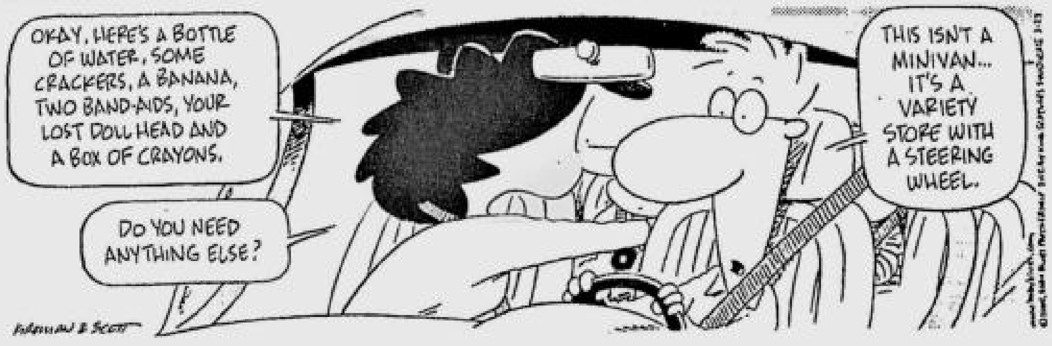

YOU DIDN'T MAIL YOUR RESUME?
I DECIDED AGAINST IT AT THE LAST MINUTE.
DISNEY IS A HUGE CORPORATION. I GOT SCARED THAT RUNNING THE COMPANY MIGHT REQUIRE A LOT OF WORK.
DUH, WHAT'D YOU EXPECT?!
WELL...
I DON'T HAVE TO GET OFF! I'M THE CEO!
BUT SIR, YOU'VE BEEN RIDING IT FOR A WEEK...
SPACE MOUNTAIN
AMEND
3-27

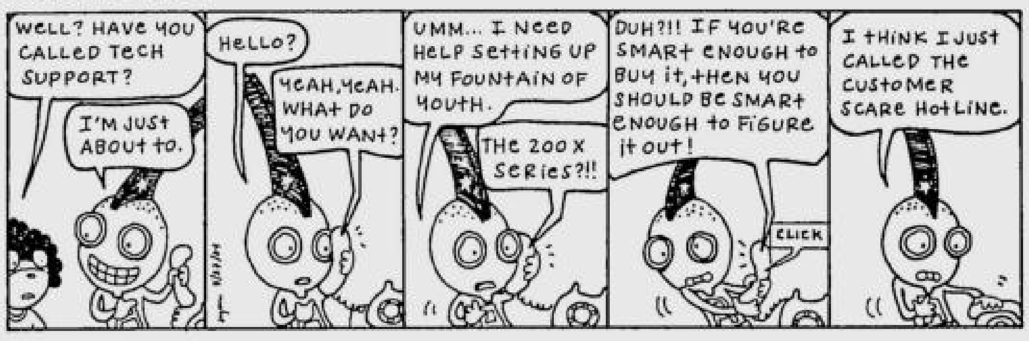
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


LUCILLE WAS TELLING ME SHE'S ON THE "HOLY DIET."
ALL YOU CAN EAT ARE FISHES AND LOAVES.
BRAN FLAKES
3-27

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


OKAY, HERE'S A BOTTLE OF WATER, SOME CRACKERS, A BANANA, TWO BAND-AIDS, YOUR LOST DOLL HEAD AND A BOX OF CRAYONS.
DO YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE?
THIS ISN'T A MINIVAN... IT'S A VARIETY STORE WITH A STEERING WHEEL.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WELL? HAVE YOU CALLED TECH SUPPORT?
I'M JUST ABOUT TO.
HELLO?
YEAH, YEAH. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
UMM... I NEED HELP SETTING UP MY FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.
THE 200X SERIES?!!
DUH?!! IF YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO BUY IT, THEN YOU SHOULD BE SMART ENOUGH TO FIGURE IT OUT!
CLICK
I THINK I JUST CALLED THE CUSTOMER SCARE HOTLINE.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are strongly individualistic. You march to your own drummer. You have a scientific mind and often master specific techniques. You are passionate and intense about your work. You don't kid yourself about your abilities. You have your finger on the pulse of the public. This year is the ending of a nine-year cycle for you.

Birthdate of: Quentin Tarantino, writer/producer; Michael York, actor; Gloria Swanson, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel that you have to have your way today. In conversation with others, you want to convince them to agree with you. Actually, this is small potatoes.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be careful shopping today. Feelings of compulsion or obsession overtake you, and you might go overboard buying something you don't need.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Ego struggles and personality clashes might take place today. That's because people seem to think they know what's best for each other.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The best way to handle today's energy is to work hard. Roll up your sleeves and dig in. Throw away garbage and things you no longer need.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Feelings of passion are strong today. You might feel as if you have a crush on someone. You feel almost childish in your demands. (Lighten up.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conversations with parents are testy today. People (including you) are coming on too strong! For some reason, you feel that heaven and earth depend on something. It doesn't.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Expect intense encounters with others today, primarily because you are emotionally involved with something. Don't give in to feelings of guilt and jealousy. They won't improve your relationships.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Yours is the most intense, passionate sign. Try to avoid emotional meltdowns today. They frighten others and make you feel miserable. What's the point? (A calmer mind always promotes happiness.)

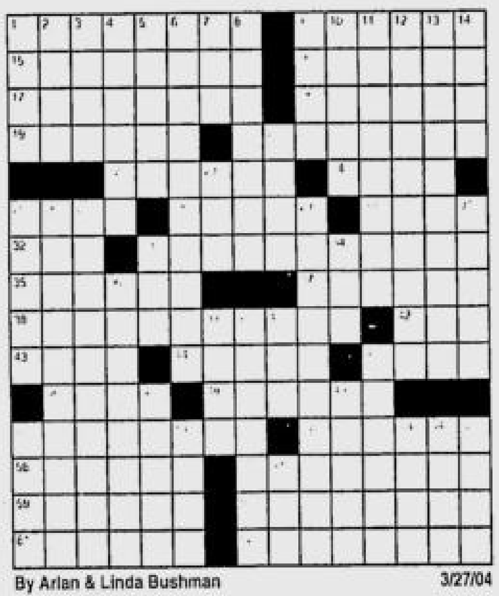
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Encounters with others are frustrating. This is not a good day to reach a conclusion about anything important. Too many subconscious fears seem to bubble to the surface now. Try to ignore them.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to make reforms and improvements on your job. Decide to really clean up the place. Get rid of useless items.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't discuss angry feelings with others today. Wait until you view matters in a calmer light. You'll get the best results that way.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today the deepest and most powerful forces seem to grip your mind. This makes you lose objectivity and detachment. That's why you should avoid squabbles or making important decisions today.

DAILY CROSSWORD

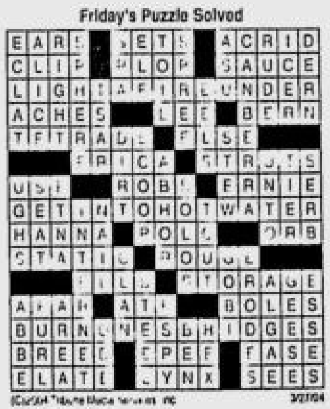


By Arlan & Linda Bushman
Chicago, IL
3/27/04

ACROSS
1 Having no practical purpose
9 Sunk in gloom
15 White-maned golden horse
16 Way out
17 Recently introduced
18 Drinks noisily
19 Armed like porcupines
20 Bread sources
22 Encroachment
24 Fox chaser?
25 "Pursuit of the Graf __"
28 Guilder replacements
30 Has a shot to win
32 Bagel topper
33 Favorite date?
35 Pale purple
37 Northern Ireland
38 Shellfish selection
42 Cycle start?
43 Ian of "The Lord of the Rings"
44 Fewer and farther between
45 Dick Tracy's Trueheart
46 Lacking fizz
48 Formal attire
50 Frozen dessert
52 Sea anchor
56 Shelf over a fireplace
57 Gloomy to the max
59 Small recess
60 Test taker
61 Church figure
62 Eye-openers?

DOWN
1 NYPD alerts
2 Quibble
3 Jai __
4 "__ Brasco"
5 City near Bremen
6 Theatrical mentalist
7 Hero follower?
8 Jersey residence?
9 Furniture in a carrell
10 Small landmass
11 Dashes here and there
12 Puppet with strings attached
13 Canapes and savories
14 Fewer
21 Hubbubs
23 French affirmative
25 Agitate a liquid
26 Cruise stopover
27 Superiority
29 Fair treatment
31 Garr and Hatcher
33 Primly demure
34 Einstein's birthplace
36 Scenery chewer
39 Pro __ (in proportion)
40 Topped a coffeecake, perhaps
41 Latin law
45 Endured harassment
47 Rome's fountain of coins
49 Serious story
50 Apple computer
51 AC/DC power
53 Sarazen or Littler
54 Exploiter
55 Summers on the Somme
58 Fifth of CCCV

Friday's Puzzle Solved



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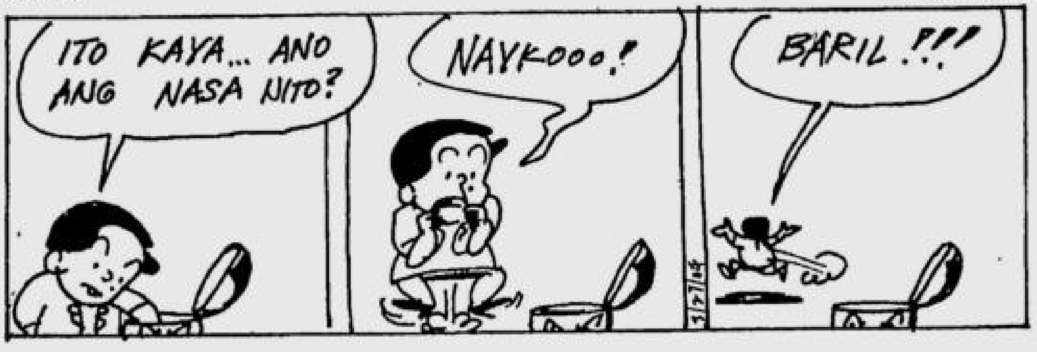
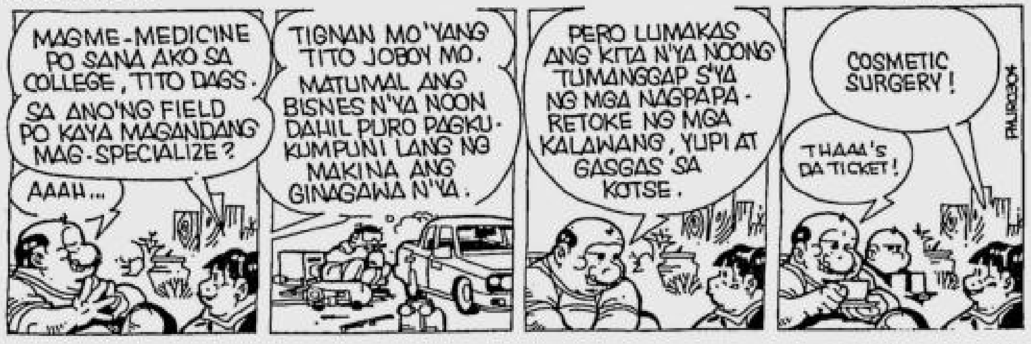
3/27/04

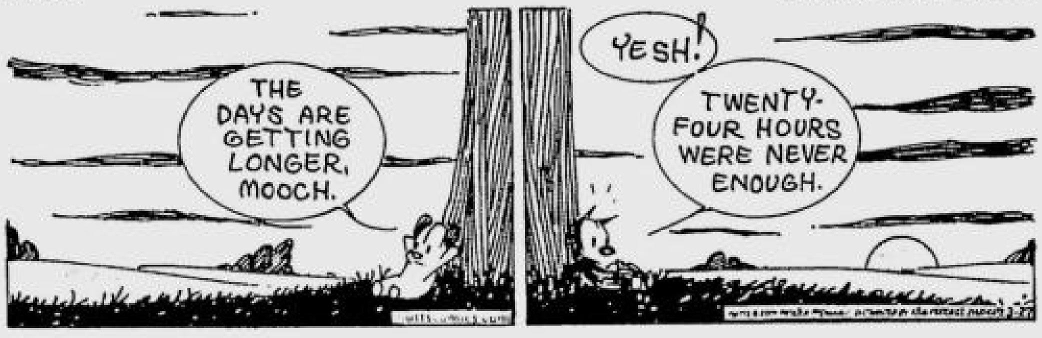
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


ITO KAYA... ANO ANG NASA NITO?
NAYKOOO.!
BARIL.!!!

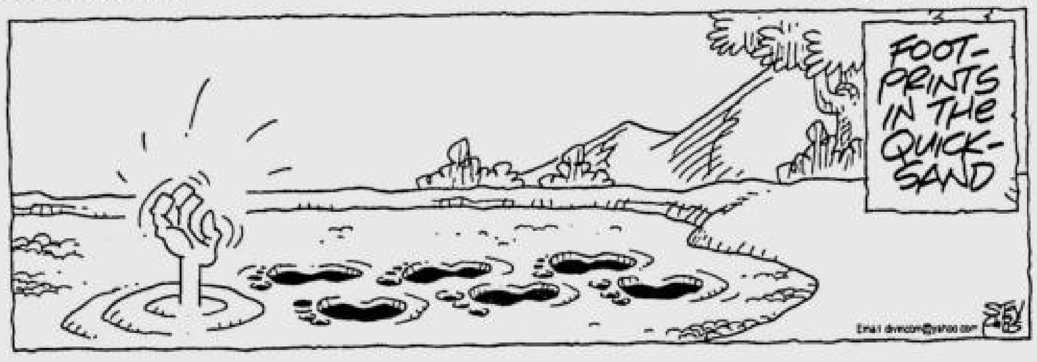
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAGME-MEDICINE PO SANA AKO SA COLLEGE, TITO DAGS.
SA ANO'NG FIELD PO KAYA MAGANDANG MAG-SPECIALIZE?
AAAH...
TIGNAN MO'YANG TITO JOBOY MO. MATUMAL ANG BISNES N'YA NOON DAHIL PURO PAGKUKUMPUNI LANG NG MAKINA ANG GINAGAWA N'YA.
PERO LUMAKAS ANG KITA N'YA NOONG TUMANGGAP S'YA NG MGA NAGPAPA-RETOKE NG MGA KALAWANG, YUPI AT GASGAS SA KOTSE.
COSMETIC SURGERY!
THAAA'S DA TICKET!
PMJR0304

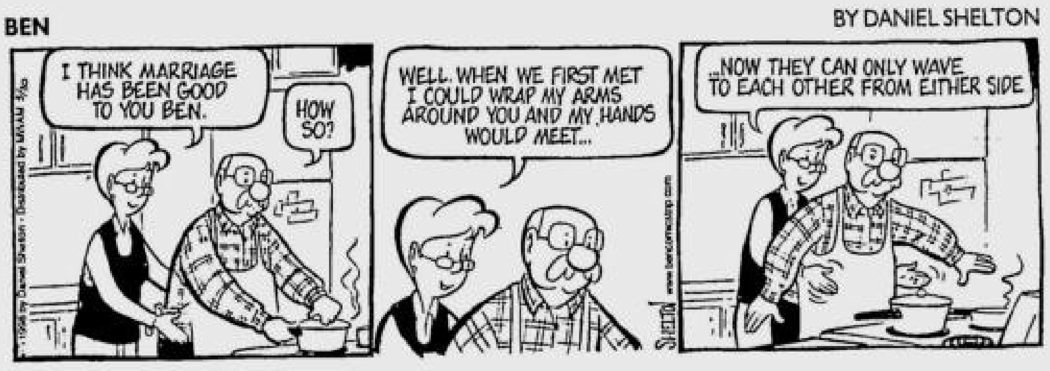
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THE DAYS ARE GETTING LONGER, MOOCH.
YESH!
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WERE NEVER ENOUGH.

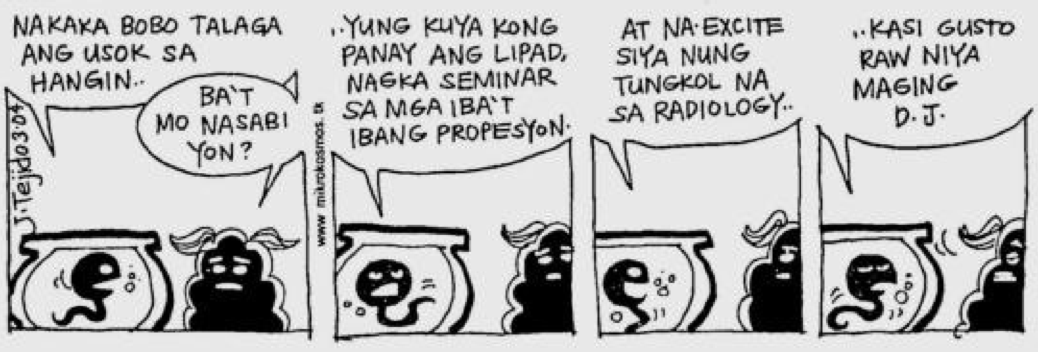
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


FOOT-PRINTS IN THE QUICK-SAND

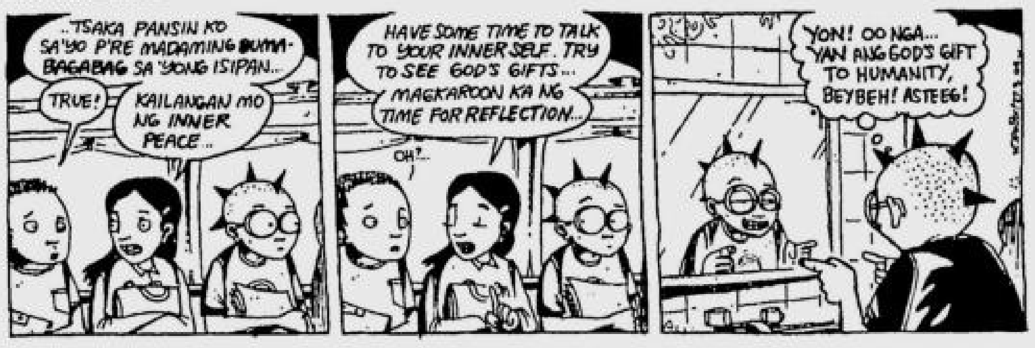
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I THINK MARRIAGE HAS BEEN GOOD TO YOU BEN.
HOW SO?
WELL. WHEN WE FIRST MET I COULD WRAP MY ARMS AROUND YOU AND MY HANDS WOULD MEET...
...NOW THEY CAN ONLY WAVE TO EACH OTHER FROM EITHER SIDE.
www.bencomicstrip.com

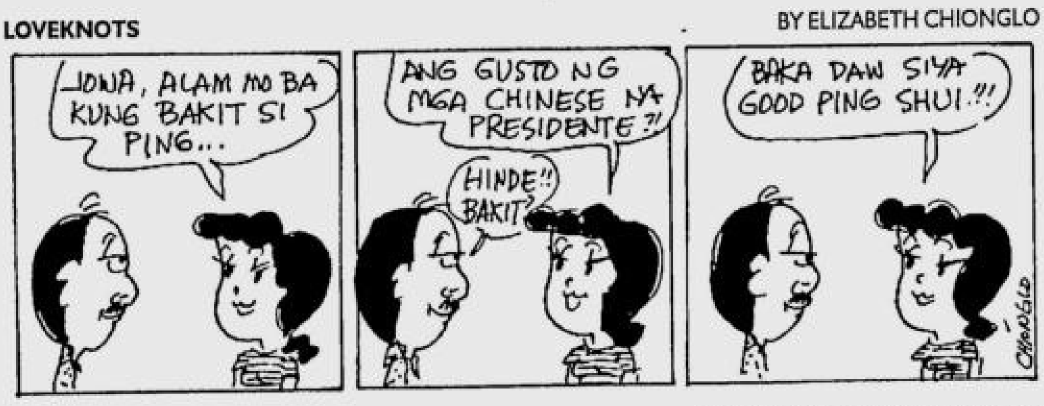
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKAKA BOBO TALAGA ANG USOK SA HANGIN..
BA'T MO NASABI YON?
..YUNG KUYA KONG PANAY ANG LIPAD, NAGKA SEMINAR SA MGA IBA'T IBANG PROPESYON.
AT NA-EXCITE SIYA NUNG TUNGKOL NA SA RADIOLOGY..
..KASI GUSTO RAW NIYA MAGING D.J.
J.Tejido3.04
www.mikrokosmos.tk

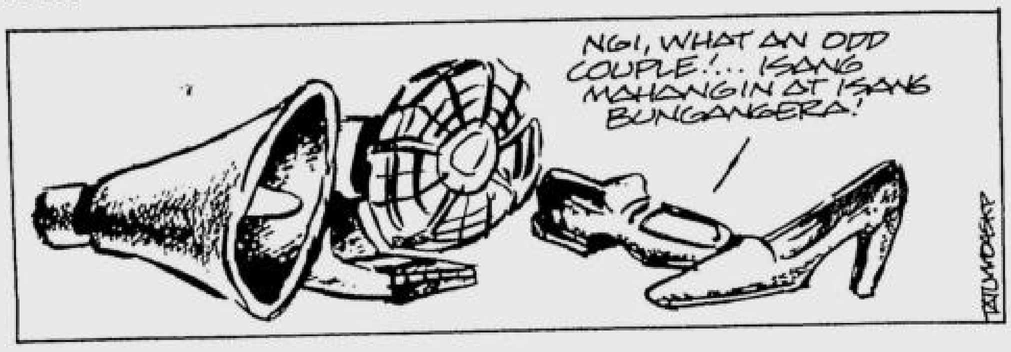
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


..TSAKA PANSIN KO SA'YO P'RE MADAMING BUMABAGABAG SA 'YONG ISIPAN..
TRUE!
KAILANGAN MO NG INNER PEACE..
HAVE SOME TIME TO TALK TO YOUR INNER SELF. TRY TO SEE GOD'S GIFTS... MAGKAROON KA NG TIME FOR REFLECTION..
OH?..
YON! OO NGA... YAN ANG GOD'S GIFT TO HUMANITY, BEYBEH! ASTEEG!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, ALAM MO BA KUNG BAKIT SI PING...
ANG GUSTO NG MGA CHINESE NA PRESIDENTE?!
HINDE!! BAKIT?
BAKA DAW SIYA GOOD PING SHUI.!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGI, WHAT AN ODD COUPLE!... ISANG MAHANGIN AT ISANG BUNGANGERA!
TATUMOKAP

Major Hollywood stars line up attention-calling starrers for 2004

By Nestor U. Torre

WHAT'S "Mr. Hollywood" Tom Hanks up to these days? He's completed work voicing Robert Zemeckis' "The Polar Express."

Based on the award-winning book that has captured the imagination of children, the film tells a charming and magical story about a boy who is beginning to doubt the existence of Santa Claus.

He boards a mysterious train headed for the North Pole. As the train passes through enchanting places, adventures ensue, and the children on board discover their true gifts.

Even better, they realize that the wonder of life never fades for those who believe.

Inspiring story

Aside from its inspiring story, "The Polar Express" boasts of wondrous images produced through state-of-the-art "motion capture" technology.

For his part, Hollywood princeling Brad Pitt topbills the epic, "Troy," directed by Wolfgang Petersen. Co-stars include Orlando Bloom, Eric Bana and Peter O'Toole.

BERRY. Plays title role in "Catwoman."

PITT. Topbills Wolfgang Petersen's "Troy."

The film dramatizes the adulterous love of the Grecian queen Helen for the Trojan Prince Paris, which plunges their nations into a war. The brutal conflict ends with the destruction of Troy and the deaths of the great opposing heroes Achilles and Hector.

Arcane arts

Even more keenly anticipated is the third Harry Potter saga, "The Prisoner of Azkaban." Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson are still studying the arcane arts at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

They're teenagers now, and they delve into the mystery surrounding an escaped prisoner who poses a dangerous threat to them. Alfonso Cuaron directs.

What about Keanu Reeves? Well, after recently playing it light in the mature romantic comedy, "Something's Gotta Give," Reeves plays it dark and intense once again in "Constantine," a film based on characters appearing in magazines published by DC Comics.

Mysterious suicide

Francis Lawrence's film is about renegade occultist John Constantine, who has literally been to hell and back. He teams up with a skeptical policewoman (Rachel Weisz) to solve the mysterious suicide of her twin sister.

Their investigation takes them through the world of demons and angels that exists beneath the landscape of contemporary life.

Finally, Halle Berry essays the title role in "Catwoman," directed by Pitof. She plays a mild-mannered artist who works for a huge cosmetics company that's about to release a revolutionary anti-aging project.

When she inadvertently stumbles upon a dark secret, she is killed. But she's given a second chance at life—as Catwoman. With her newfound power, she sets out to stop her former employer's callous plan to unleash a shockingly dangerous product into the world. Benjamin Bratt and Sharon Stone co-star.

Michiko Yamamoto scores with 'Magnifico'

From page F1

Michiko wasn't around to receive her trophy during the Star Awards night, although Marjo J requested her to attend the rites. She politely refused to go because she's very shy. *"Talagang nanginginig ako sa mga ganyan,"* she shares.

Something better

Michiko admits being pressured to come up with something better or at par with her award-winning story. *"Pero, ako naman, di ko tinatanggap ang* project if I know *na di ko masusulat ng maayos.* What I like in a project is *yung nararamdaman ko at nakaka*-relate *ako,"* she explains.

How was it working with Direk Maryo J? "He respects new writers, which is rare especially *sa* television, *kung saan nagsulat din ako.* He revised my script with my permission *at kung ano ang sinusulat ko, yun din ang sinu*-shoot niya," she says.

Direk Maryo must have liked her, too. They are set to collaborate again on another family drama that is intended for the Manila Film Festival.

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Hollywood's Brazilian Bombshell remembered

By Behn Cervantes

"MANEEE . . . mah----neeee." Carmen Miranda would sing as though Brazilian peanuts were an exotic aphrodisiac. Her flamboyant, dynamic style made her a great box office attraction in Hollywood musicals in the '40s. She sang and delivered lines in fast staccato that henceforth became the stereotypical image of the temperamental Latin *señorita*.

Portugese parents

Miranda was actually born Maria do Carmen da Cunha in Marco de Canaveres, Portugal. Her Portuguese parents moved to Brazil when she was a child.

By the time she was brought over to the US by the Shubert brothers to star on Broadway, she had already appeared in several Brazilian films.

Fox quickly brought Carmen to Hollywood, where her energetic singing, flamboyant costumes and idiosyncratic headgear became her trademarks.

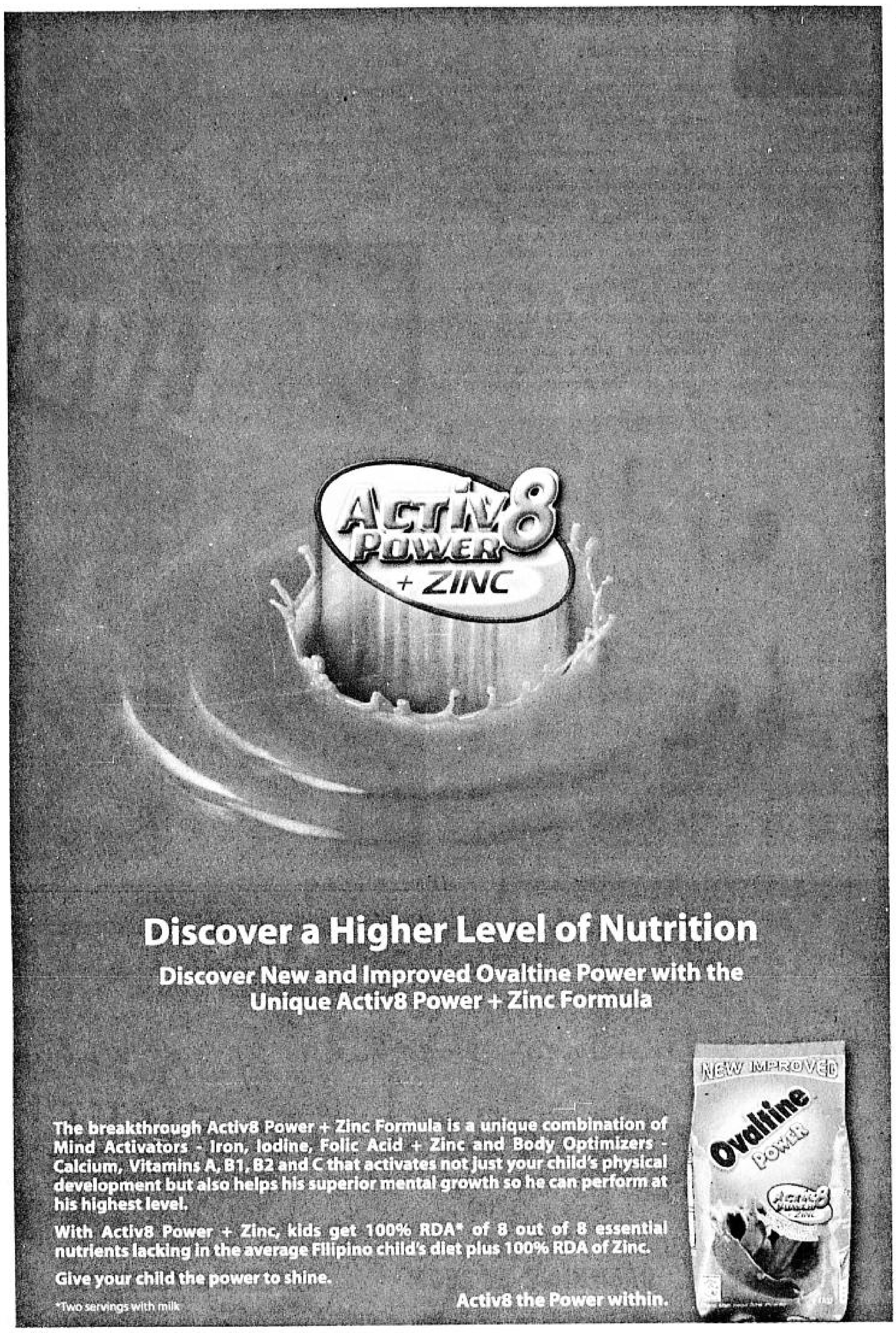
The diminutive and temperamental star was a mere 4'10", so she wore five-inch platform shoes and headgear laden with many tropical fruits.

Immediate success

Carmen became an immediate success. She was quickly billed as the Brazilian Bombshell by studio publicists. She became a big box-office draw, but her unchanging style soon became passé.

She died of a heart attack while doing a demanding number in a Jimmy Durante TV special in 1955. Today, her fruity headgear, costumes and other memorabilia are housed in the Carmen Miranda Museum in Brazil.

MIRANDA. Stereotypical image of temperamental Latin *señorita*.



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Grand ballet recital

MONTAGE

AT 10 a.m., 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on March 28, the Halili Cruz School of Ballet will hold its 42nd grand ballet recital in three tiers at the Meralco Theater.

The recitalists will come from the school's main studio and HCSB branches at Poveda Learning Center, St. Mary's College, Sienna College, Marymount School, School of St. Anthony and Alabang Country Club.

The artistic team is composed of Shirley Halili Cruz, Grace Garalde Perez, Anna Lissa Balmadrid and Anna Katharina Cruz, with Tony Fabella as guest choreographer.

The school's summer dance workshop will run from April 3 to May 30 for the first batch, and from April 14 to May 30 for the second batch. Auditions for scholarships are at 3 p.m. on April 13. Call 372-4607.

Family entertainment at Dreamscape

Dreamscape, the family entertainment center at the fourth level of Robinsons Galleria, Ortigas, has become the venue of fun kiddie parties.

The latest treat is the Mad Science Birthday Party. Based in Canada, Mad Science is the world's leading fun science provider. Its one-hour show features experiments that are engaging, interactive, fun and safe.

Children can also enjoy popular rides like the Super Sonic V roller-coaster, Thunder Cruiser, Roaring Rapids, Speed Bug bump cars and Grand Parade carousel.

The birthday package comes inclusive of cake, invitations, party hats, balloons and loot bags. Call 636-2911.

'Crazy in Love'

F4's Vanness Wu performs in the Philippines anew in "Crazy in Love," a concert to be staged tonight at the Araneta Coliseum, and on March 29 at the Abellana Sports Complex in Cebu City.

Other performers include Pops Fernandez, Francis M, Jay-R, Mark Herras and Yasmien Kurdi. Rowell Santiago directs. Call 891-9999.

Video releases

Warner Home Video's latest releases are the DVD and VCD releases of "The Matrix Revolutions" and "Looney Tunes-Back in Action."

The "Matrix" DVD includes bonus features like "Revolutions Recalibrated," a behind-the-scenes overview of the groundbreaking work that went into the final chapter; "Super Burly Brawl," on how the final Neo/Smith showdown was filmed, and "Super Big Mini Models," on the film's models and miniatures.

The "Looney Tunes" DVD includes additional scenes, an exclusive animated short, a "Looney" set tour, and Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck's perspective on the movie's special effects.

Movies on TV

On HBO, March 27 at 10:15 a.m., "Devil in a Blue Dress." March 28 at 1:30 p.m., "Save the Last Dance." March 29 at 5:30 p.m., "Rudy." March 30 at 10:30 p.m., "The Majestic."

On Cinemax, March 27 at 6:45 p.m., "The Age of Innocence." March 28 at 6:30 a.m., "The Sting." March 29 at 1 p.m., "Mandela and De Klerk." March 30 at 9:30 a.m., "A Man for All Seasons."

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SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004

Super Countdown
44

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY Super

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph

Contributing Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

sand and deliver

Rays today Raisins tomorrow page H1

Horsing around page I2

Mirage of Summer page G2

Photography: STEVE TIRONA
Styling: TALS DIAZ,
GINO DE LA PAZ,
and MARTIN VALDES
Clothes by NOTHING BUT WATER
Cover Star: CATHY MERKL

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summer
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at the children's shoes
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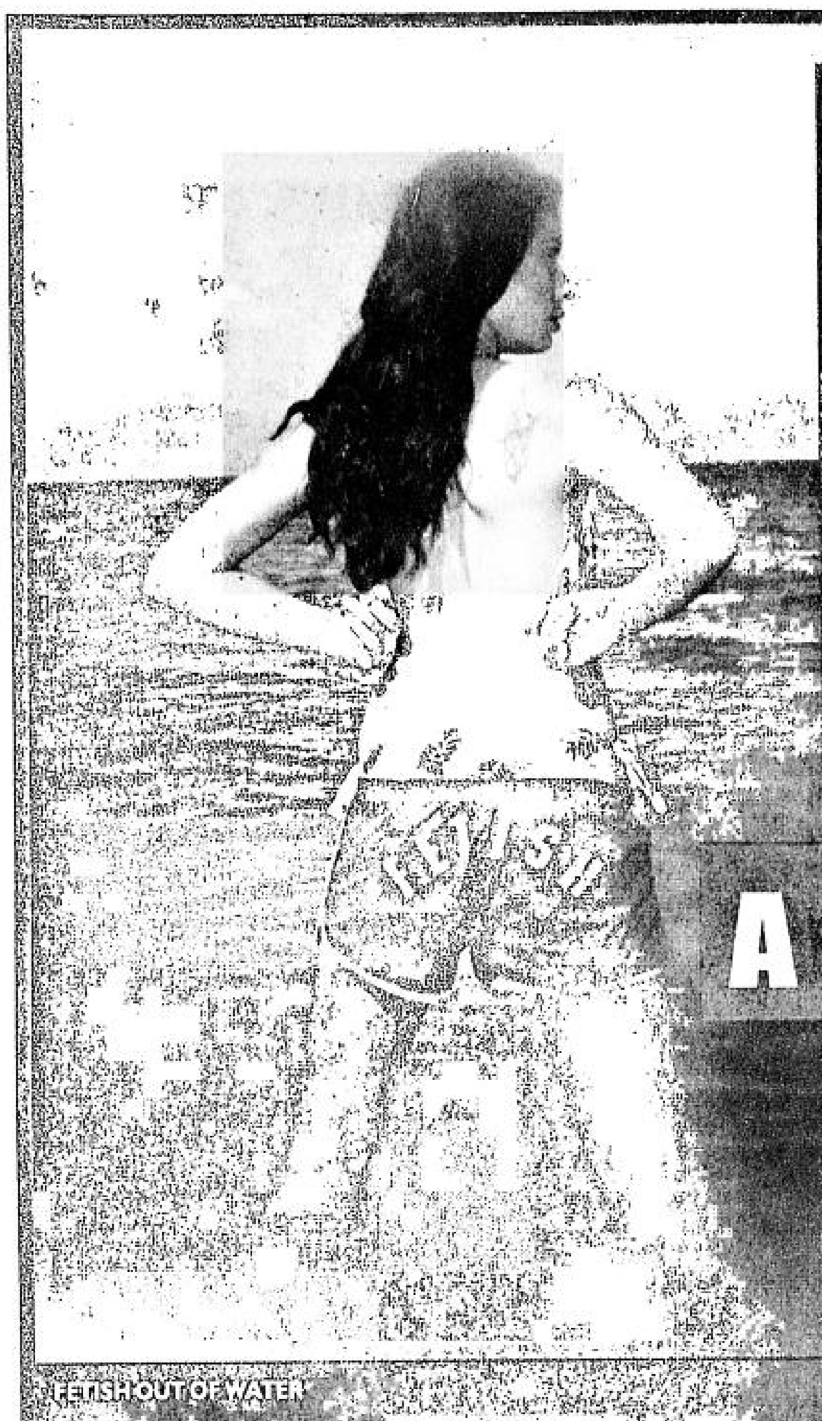
CATCH OF THE DAY


FETISH OUT OF WATER

A mirage of sun and sand

WE are starved for beauty. Our senses, parched by the unrelenting ultraviolet rays of hyper-awareness and everyday living, have been hammered into near submission. The year is a desert, merciless and vast, and we have but crawled through most of it. Politics, religion, gossip, lawlessness, traffic, bureaucracy, Andrew E—the buzzards are circling.

But Summer, an oasis in the wasteland, is within touching distance. Like the promise of better times, it beckons the thirsty to be refreshed, the hungry to be satisfied, and the weak to be invigorated.

Summer is a 90-day dream that sleep interrupts. It is about beautiful people in beautiful places. It is about ivory beaches and smoky barbecues, *halo-halo* and ice cold beer, bikinis and coconut oil, and for the academically challenged, it is about summer classes. Ha-ha!

So we've survived another year, fellow Bedouins, and the oasis awaits. Pony up this summer, drink your fill of what the season offers, and may the good memories be enough to tide you over until next year. *Martin Valdes*

ROPE BURN

LUCKY BEACH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE TIRONA
CLOTHES AND ACCESORIES: NOTHING BUT WATER
FOOTWEAR: HAVAIANAS
MODELS: BIANCA FERNANDEZ OF CAL CARRIES AND CATHY MERKL
SHOT ON LOCATION: OCEANA RESORT, PUERTO GALERA, MINDORO

Delayed reaction

Dear Man About Town,

My girlfriend is always late for everything. We miss the start of movies, arrive embarrassingly late for events, have our restaurant reservations cancelled, all because she has no concept of time. I tell her again and again that I consider this a problem. She apologizes each time, but she has not changed a bit.

Last week at my sister's wedding, I almost missed the march because my girlfriend took forever to get her makeup done. We had such a big fight and almost broke up. I hate to sound petty, considering that other couples have much more serious concerns, but this is beginning to really upset me. What should I do?

Man about town

Chuck Dy

THE CONNECTION between women and time has long been explored by higher minds than mine, with results that remain inexplicable. Like one of those phenomena that continue to elude solid scientific logic, such as the extinction of dinosaurs and traffic in Manila, female punctuality resides in the realm of speculation. While it might be totally unfair and sexist to generalize that all women are habitually late, I can share that most women I have dated suffered from time mismanagement or, as I like to call it, retardiness. But because this condition seemed only to afflict women I was romantically involved with (in contrast, females in my professional environment were rigidly punctual), I had begun to suspect that they were late on purpose for reasons I resolve to investigate further.

One theory is, genetics: a female is biologically disposed to ignore a clock if there is a male monitoring it. It is in their DNA to make us wait, to teach us a valuable lesson crafted through millennia of gender interaction: muscle mass means jack shit to the missus. For all their supposed power, the fact remains that men are willing to wait on women. Yes, my fellow males, we've given them the right to suffrage, drivers' licenses, Oprah Winfrey, and now we must tolerate bathroom marathons. Sexual equality does not exist; it was officially pronounced dead in 1970 and the corpse was kicked when Kris Aquino became a national celebrity.

Rose, Mary and Time

Also, I conjecture that Nature granted women an element of chrono-cruelty to offset the male predisposition to perceive life through his penis. They make us wait as payback for all those centuries of gender stereotyping and sexual inequalities. It is an act of vengeance unconsciously fulfilled by abusing the very practices that men themselves have forced upon women. Men created cosmetics to fuel the illusion that physical beauty is all. Now women take 60 minutes to apply makeup that is supposed to look like it isn't there. Men connived throughout history to undermine feminine credibility. Now we wait for them, routinely undermining our own credibility, wondering what the hell is taking them so long, suspecting that they're on their phones reporting their success to Cosmopolitan magazine.

Lastly, there is the difference in perception to consider. Men see time in spatial increments within a linear dimension, independent of human participation. Thanks to those rogues at Revlon, women reference time according to how much they get done. In short, men measure time with a clock, women with actual accomplishment.

In any case, time is money and certain women are way too profligate. The first thing is to place things in perspective. While tardiness can become a source of constant irritation, it is by no means as serious as other relational problems such as infidelity or venereal disease (another source of constant irritation). For the record I'm going to say, teach her a lesson and leave her delinquent derriere the next time she is late. Off the record, I'm going to say, live with it. I once gave an ex-girlfriend the ultimatum: "Start respecting my adherence to punctuality, or else ..." She is now dating a man with considerably less dignity than mine, while I spend evenings watching reruns of The Simpsons which start, promptly, at six in the evening.

Hour Glass is Half-Empty

Avoid making this too much of an issue. Why bother? There are so many other things couples are bound to split hairs over; save your hostility for those. And under no circumstance should you succumb to the temptation of getting witty about her punctuality. You will discover—to the dismay of our species—that women are more adept than men at wielding the verbal saber to humiliate. The last thing you want is to be pressed for time and panache. Trust me, better late than clever.

One drastic idea suggested by a friend was to physically manipulate all the time pieces in the girl's residence so that they displayed a later time, in the hopes that this would condition her to operate at a more efficient rate. His girlfriend became more punctual, indeed ... but she also went mad, arriving for functions on time but ranting about conspiracy theories and daylight savings. An early bird gone cuckoo. I'm saving this solution for my future mother-in-law.

DIGITAL ARTWORK MARTIN VALDES

INSISTENCE OF TIME
by Salvador Dali-an mo!

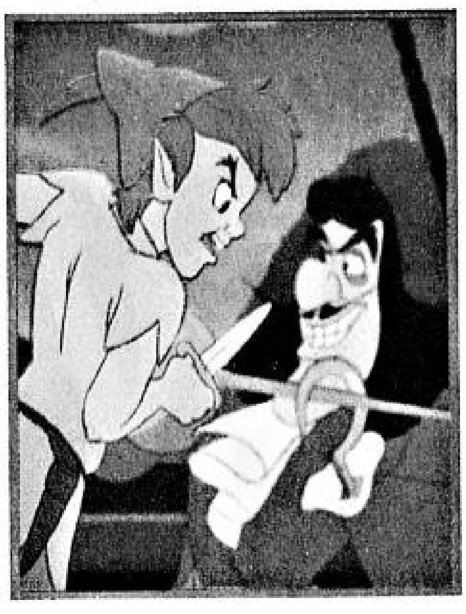
A less comic fix may be to simply anticipate your girlfriend's lassitude towards time management. Dinner reservations at eight? Tell her seating is at seven. Movie starts in an hour? Convince her otherwise and then soothe her fury over being unnecessarily rushed by enjoying the fabulous trailers that you always miss. And if you've determined that she is always late by a fixed increment of time, then simply go by the preordained durational discrepancy. Or if your personality demands that you arrive on time regardless of the probable outcome, then just bring a book along. My longest relationship lasted the length of Crime and Punishment. Felt like it, too.

A woman is a beautiful enigma that is not supposed to be understood, just experienced. The less we attempt to unravel the myriad mysteries behind their actions, the more we will appreciate them for simply being there. Accommodate the strange nuances as characteristics that make her special. Sympathize with her penchant for tardiness, nodding your head solemnly as she explains, "Max Factor is a process." Most of all, do not allow her negligence of time to become a bigger problem than it really is. For one day, my friend, she will approach you on her own volition, take your hand in hers, and whisper into your ear the very words you tell her so often: "I'm late."

And then you've got a *real* problem.

(E-mail author at bohemiansamurai@yahoo.com)

I still want to be a Peter Pan who battles the seriousness of adulthood, or a Walt Disney who immortalizes the eternal wonderment of the young



SWAK!

by **Lex**

Fool in the cesspool

HOW many tales are really as old as time? Which ones encompass the entire human experience? Are there really plots that cut through the fluff and get to the core of what it means to be alive?

I used to want to be Peter Pan: forever young, carefree, reckless, and immersed in a world where fun was the only aspiration. Somewhere down the line, despite the fact that I swore never to allow this part of me to fade, I forgot. The when and where got lost in the annals of my personal history, swept under many other things that were once important but are now gathering dust. I'm still perplexed. How did this happen?

Chain of fools

When I talk to older people or study history, I keep arriving at the same conclusion. It seems that since man crawled out of the sea and grew a brain, he has been making the same stupid mistakes again and again. Like me, with the failed resolution to keep things fun, others have made personal pledges that are now kaput.

Can anybody beat the system? Or is the game rigged from the start, a guarantee that the house would always win? Maybe this is a cosmic joke, as if God is saying, "Ha! Thought you could sneak by unnoticed, did 'ya? Not on my watch, boy."

How many times have you heard teens bitching about their parents?

"My Dad never listens to me."

"*Grabe*, my Mom is so *kulit*!"

"When I grow up and have kids of my own I swear I'll never be like that."

Cut to 20 years later and you see these "persecuted" offspring doing to their brood the exact same things that they complained about.

While there are no foolproof escape plans from this apparent glitch in the system, I for one am not ready to go down without a fight. Maybe I'll never defeat the grand conspiracy that seems embedded in our human nature but trust me, I'm going to try.

Here's the plan Stan

Emboldened and steadfast, my action plan is first to study what has come before me. If I accept that the mistakes of my family members and predecessors could possibly happen to me, I can at least try to react differently when the same situations present themselves. Perhaps the biggest blunder is to say, "That can never happen to me." Once those six words have been uttered, the gods will have been tempted and the jinx is surely in.

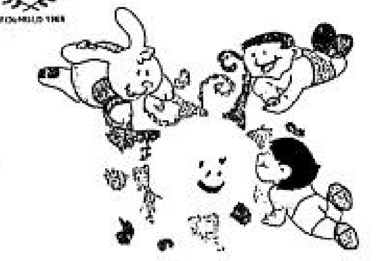
Good times don't last forever, and for every shining star there are a dozen others that have crashed and burned. I remember that we all beamed with pride when several Filipinos had their moment in the sun, bagging major contracts abroad. Gino Padilla (the Pinoy Bruce Springsteen) rocked with Tina Turner in a huge Pepsi commercial. Lilet was hailed as future of the world as lead talent in an international Coca-Cola ad. And Banig, who was only a kid then, won "Star Search," the biggest US talent search show in the 1980s. Where are they now? They have disappeared into the netherworld of the entertainment universe. Unless the people on the top of the heap bother to investigate the failures of predecessors, chances are they'll make the same mistakes.

On a personal level, I've devised my own strategy. After understanding my past and planning my future, I am going to write it all down. There is a value to writing down what you want to become, and also what you want to avoid. Otherwise, it's so easy to forget. Already I've made a list of what I want to do before I die, as well as what has been done to me that I don't want to repeat. While this sounds infantile and pedantic, I'm convinced that the reason many continue to repeat the mistakes of generations past is because they are so busy looking at the trees that they don't realize that they've gotten lost in the forest. Once a person's intentions have been inked on paper, half the battle is won. After all, how can a ship reach its destination if it doesn't know where it's going?

If in the land of the blind the one eyed man is king, then I want to be king. Or a Peter Pan who crusades against the seriousness of adulthood. Or a Walt Disney who immortalizes the eternal wonderment of the young. I do not want to make the same mistakes my parents made which are the identical slip-ups of their own parents, who inherited these from their ancestors. Maybe I'm a fool for trying to beat the system. But that's cool; someone's got to take a crack at it.

Excuse me for a second. I've got to fly off to Never-Never Land.

(Lighten up and e-mail me at swak1@info.com.ph!)



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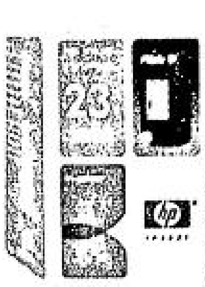

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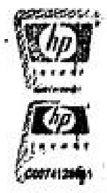

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hp invent

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0159, Series of 2004

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2. Only original HP ink cartridges, with raffle stickers, purchased from February 15 to May 15, 2004 are qualified to join the promotion.
3. Only original inks purchased in participating resellers are qualified entries in this promotion. Consumer may call the HP hotline at 867-3557 or 1800-1331-4488 to check on the list of participating resellers.
4. The entire box of participating inkjet cartridges will serve as entry. Customers must fill out the raffle coupon, on the sticker attached to the box, with the ff. information:
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5. Drop entries in any of HP's GET REAL Raffle Promo drop boxes located in selected HP dealers in GMA/Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. All drop boxes will be labeled per area.
6. A total of 5 draws will be held - - 2 preliminary draws each for the Visayas/Mindanao and GMA/Luzon area, and 1 Grand Draw. All non-winning entries during the preliminary draws will automatically be included in the Grand Draw.
7. Promo period is from Feb 15 to May 15, 2004.

Draw Date	Area	Deadline for submission of entries	Prizes per area
1st Draw March 19, 2004	GMA/LUZON and VIS/MIN	March 15, 2004 (store close)	(7) Nike GCs worth PhP 2,500.00 (1) Rudy Project Kerosene Shades (1) Nokia 3200 (1) Home Entertainment System from Sony (DAV-SA30, TV-BT2-1N40)
2nd Draw April 21, 2004	GMA/LUZON and VIS/MIN	April 15, 2004 (store close)	(7) Creative LX200 MP3 Player (2) HP IPAQ h2210 Pocket PC (1) Sony Ericsson P900
Grand Draw May 28, 2004	Nationwide	May 15, 2004 (store close)	(10) HP IPAQ h1930 Pocket PC (1) 2003 Ford Escape (XLS, 4X2 M/T)

A participant can only win once per raffle draw, if a participant's name gets drawn more than once, he/she gets the bigger prize. Winners will be notified via registered mail and telephone. Names of winners shall be published in a national daily newspaper. HP will shoulder 20% withholding tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.00. To claim the prize, winners must present at least one (1) valid ID (driver's license, company ID, valid passport, etc.) as well as the registered mail notification. Prizes may be claimed at Publicis Dialog Office - 10/F IBM Plaza Bldg. Eastwood City Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays only. Look for Ms. Violeta Vallejo. Provincial winners can claim their prizes at the nearest office specified on the registered mail or sent through courier. In case the winner is a company, the prize will be awarded to the company through the authorized representative who signed the raffle entry, upon presentation of an authorization letter from the company. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification shall be forfeited in favor of HEWLETT-PACKARD Philippines, Corp. with prior approval from DTI. The winner will shoulder pertinent registration and other expense concerning the prize vehicle. All employees of Hewlett-Packard Philippines Corp., distributors, dealers, resellers, it's advertising and promotions agencies and their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are not qualified to join. HP reserves the right to certify if the winning entries are legitimate. HP's decision in concurrence with DTI rules and regulation, regarding HP's Get Real raffle promotion will be deemed final and non-negotiable.

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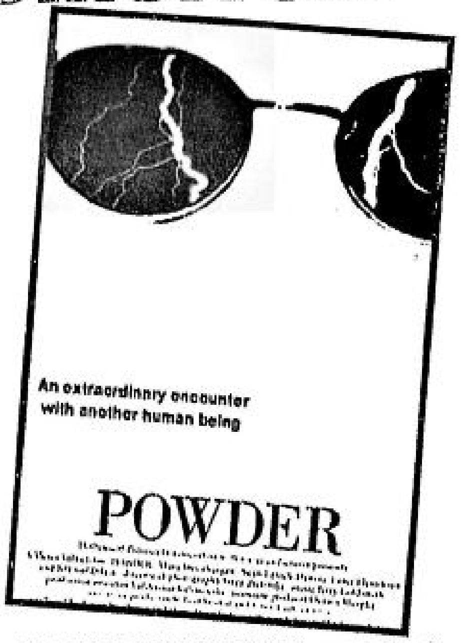
I WISH I could say that I love Boracay. I can't; I've never been there.

This confession may be a bit of a curve ball given that I'd like to think I'm sort of a global soul. Yeah, I've gone diving in the Caribbean, had a few Buds by the Mediterranean, gone skinny-dipping in both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North America, and even tried the beaches along England's southern tip. In the Philippines, nevertheless, the only legit beaches I've dipped into are El Nido in Palawan and Puerto Galera in Mindoro. The list looks like it might stop there. Does this make me a culturally inept dumbass? I hope not.

As a dyed-in-the-wool city kid, my idea of a perfect holiday involves shuffling through a dusty record store in a Slovenian ghetto rather than lazing on a sun-drenched shore in Fiji. This isn't to say, of course, that I'm not in awe of Mother Nature, the great outdoors, and all that Discovery Channel *ish*. Hipster pursuits aside, I've flown to marvel at a few mountains, lakes, and nature preserves at a certain point and found the experience to be as satisfying and edifying as an afternoon at the Tate Modern. However, like Spike from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," I'm just not a big fan of the sun. This aversion extends to the sun's byproducts, heat and ultraviolet radiation, making any form of exposed territory—be it an ocean, a walkway, or an entire country—a personal no-fly zone. I may be a cold-weather sort of guy with a slight fetish for subzero temperatures, but I wasn't always like this.

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz


An extraordinary encounter with another human being
POWDER

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Traditionally, my family marked the beginning of summer with a beach trip or a pool

RAYS TODAY/ H2

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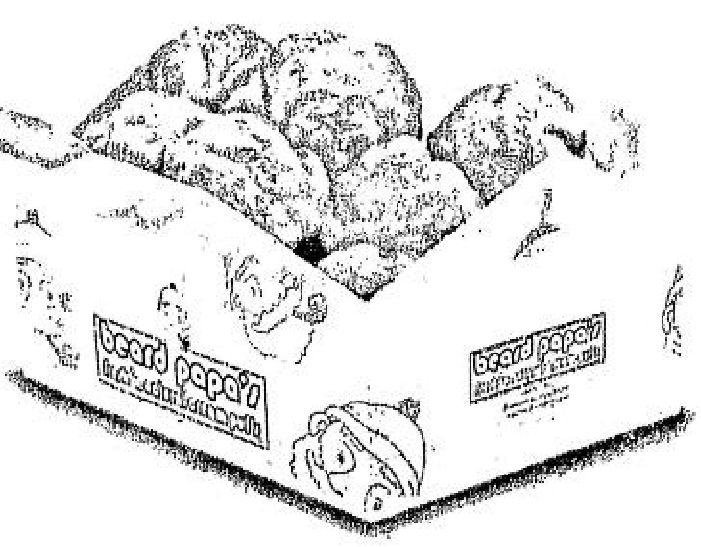

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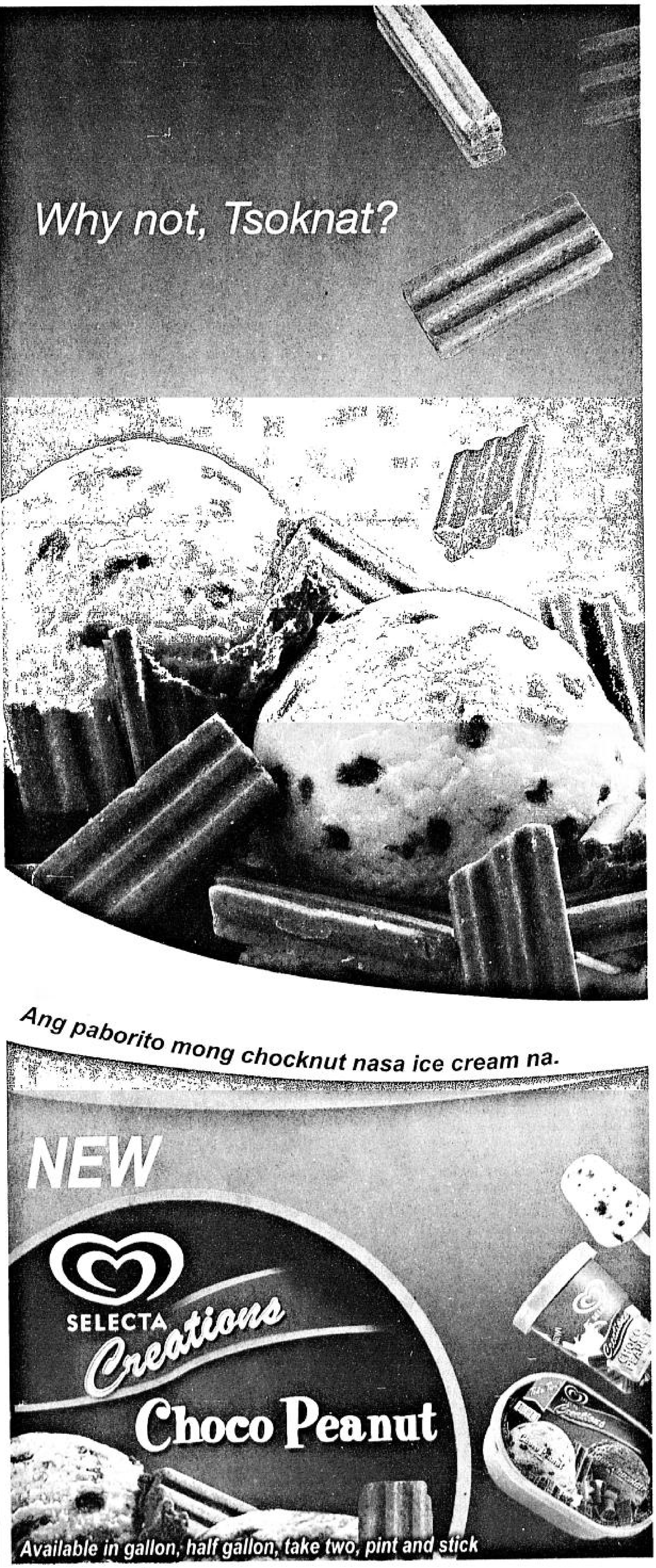

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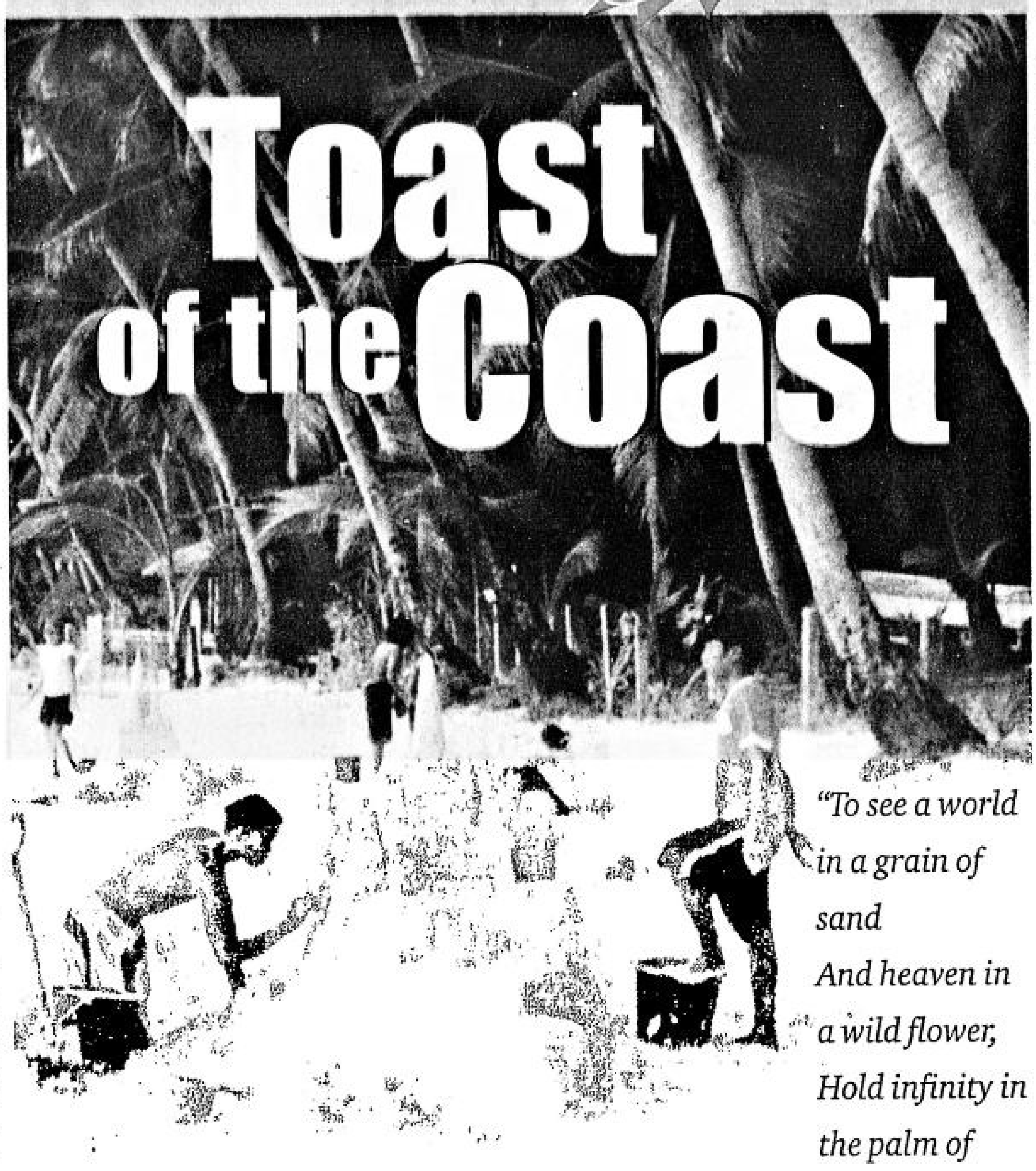
OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz



Toast of the Coast

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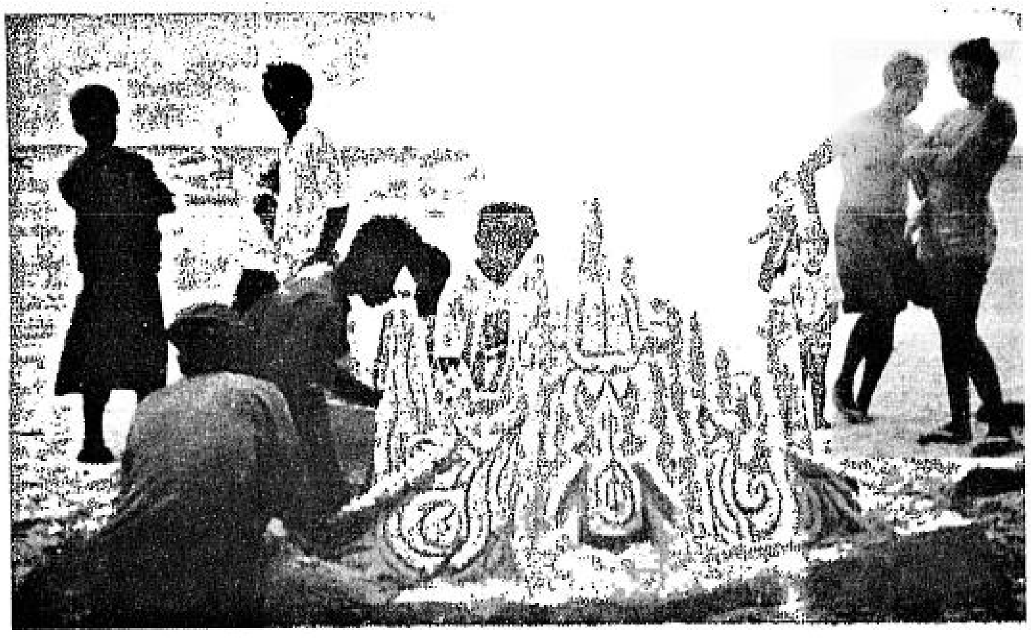

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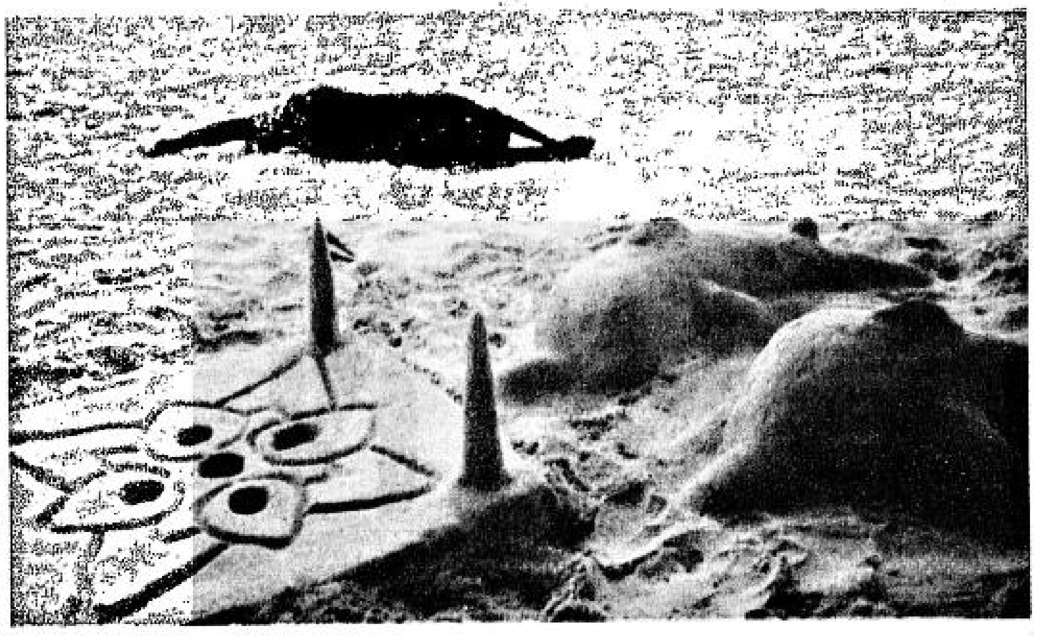

PATAY kang bata ka. Where's David Hasselhoff when you need him?

Rays today, raisins tomorrow

From page H1

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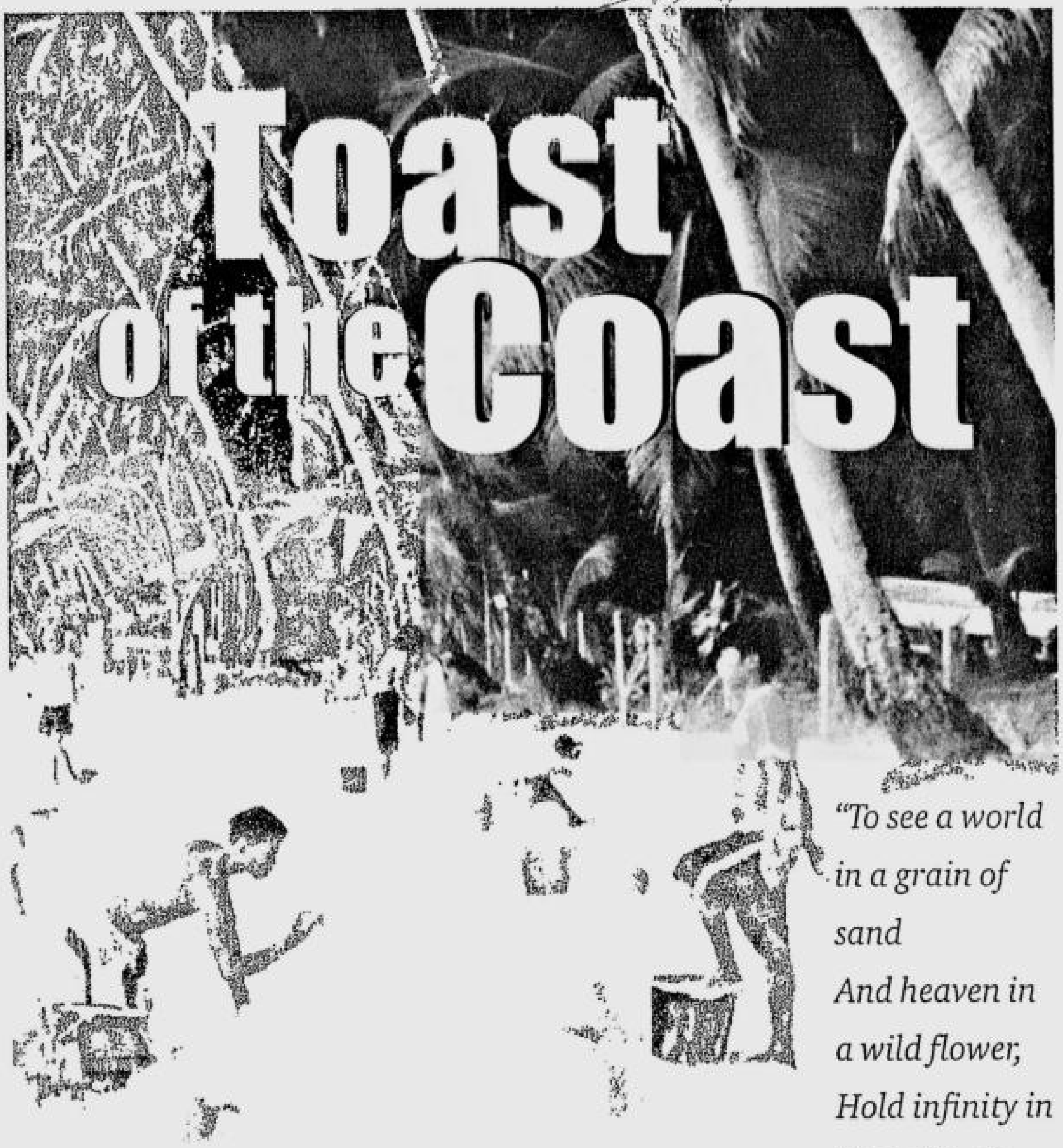
OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz



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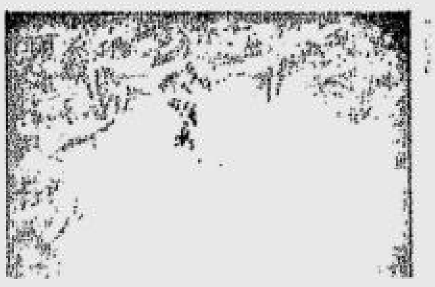

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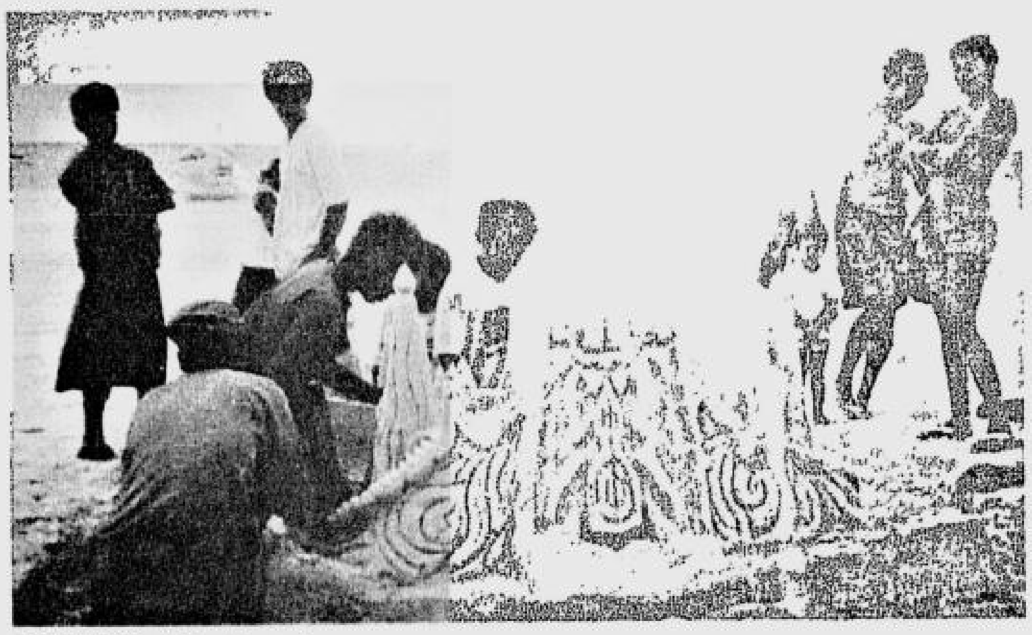

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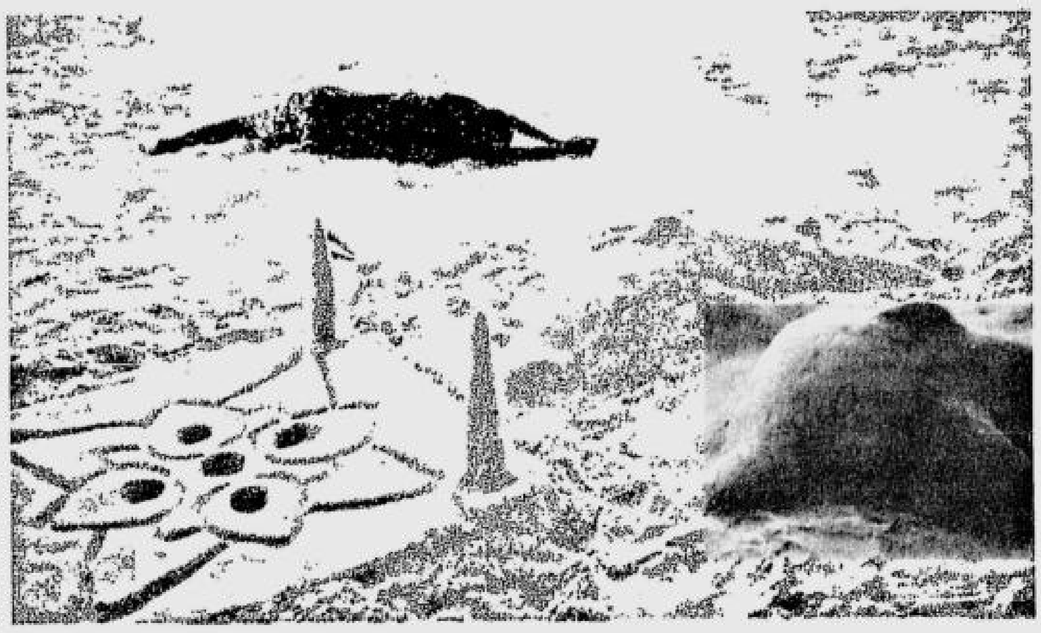

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RATED Robby Mananquil

LEMON HEADS. EJ Segovia, Geoff Rodriguez, Arvin Mendoza, Francis Mabasa, Jamey Tabora and Rafael Rossell

LEMON DROPS. Edge Pamute, Lemon publisher Brian Siew and Shanice

TIME WARP. Brando Umali and Shannen Torres

Stamp of success

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

WHAT would make a party a "certified success"? Of course, if you are the host, the answer might be not just one ingredient. To start with, there would definitely be the venue to consider. Is it accessible to your guests? How spacious is it? Is the rent budget-friendly? Music and entertainment would set the mood of the affair. These could make or break your thing. And certainly, the guest list has got some weight, too. If it is studded with perfumed names, people would naturally want to be present. Other aspects to be considered are food and drink, the program, and party favors. But no can deny that when the gathering is in full swing, a quick look around—how the guests are enjoying themselves (getting hammered?) should be a priority as well.

If you had to choose, though, could you single out just one component that is more important than the others? Personally, I think the prime element of a smashing party is being in the midst of friends. You could attempt to throw the bash of the century but if your buddies don't show up, wouldn't that put a crack on your party snow globe? No matter how big or small the "production" is, friends should be the reason to celebrate.

At this point, allow me to be a tad self-serving. Lemon Magazine, your club guide, just turned a year old and our little festivity was a truly happy get-together of friends. (Special thanks to BigFish for helping us make the whole thing possible!)

Saturday, March 27

Come what may! Remember "Moulin Rouge"? This is your chance to become the seductress Satin (Nicole Kidman) or the love fool Christian (Ewan McGregor) as Absinth, for its first anniversary party, adopts the motion picture's theme. Women are encouraged to come in corsets and ball skirts; men in sexy suspenders and nothing else! Just kidding! Party kicks in around 9 p.m. Call Absinth for details, 757-4966.

Sunday, March 28

It's your last chance to view the paintings of Malaysian Ambassador Mohammed Taufik at his own residence. How often do you find a diplomat who actually holds an art exhibit? This one has 52 works on display! "Recent Works by Mohammed Taufik" is open for public viewing from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. For the address and other details, call 817-4581 and ask for Flor or Rabelle.

Monday, March 29

Check out a group exhibit by artists Ronald Anading, Ringo Bunoan, Lena Cobangbang, Louie Cordero, Jayson Oliveria and MM Yum. "Advanced Problems 101" is on display at the Magnet Gallery, Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas cor. Sedeno Street, Makati City.

Tuesday, March 30

Here's a deadly combination if I ever saw one! Amanda Griffin, Bianca Zobel, Karen Grupp and Tina Pamintuan bring you "Fatally Femme Tuesdays," 9 p.m. at Azurro, 2nd floor, Somerset Hotel, 104 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Theme is "Casino Night," as in "Vegas here we come!" Bling bling, black jack, flashy cash, cigarette and candy girls— you'll be transported straight into Nevada! Dance to no less than sexy hip hop music!

Wednesday, March 31

Last chance to see the exhibit of 10 artists from the Tam-Awan Group—BenCab, Buddy Cabrera, Ged Alagui, Leonardo Aguinaldo, Jojo Elmeda, Ronald Bay-an, Tuls Tulas, John Frank Sabado, Jordan Mangosan and Rishab. The works are recent efforts. At the Renaissance Art Gallery, 4th level, SM Megamall.

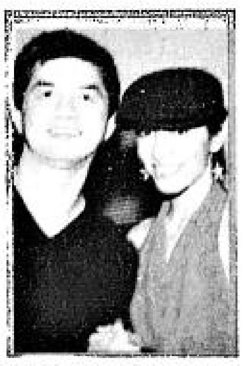
Thursday, April 1

The Philippines is probably the nation with the best "political" sense of humor. "Electile Dysfunction," will have its last run this night at the Music Museum. The story line flows through Philippine socio-economic and political landscapes, especially tackling presidential candidates. Tickets are available at the Music Museum and all Ticketworld outlets. For show buyers and group bookings, dial 843-3503 or 843-3836.

Friday, April 2

What could be more potent than great music and good Mediterranean food at BBC's Nirvana Lounge? Dance around, lounge about, lift your spirits with your favorite Buddha beats by BBC DJs Bong Garcia and Carlo Ching. Only at the Prince of Jaipur, The Fort Global City. Have all-you-can-consume Tanqueray from 10 p.m. to 12 midnight!

LEMON TRIO. Drew Penalosa, Steff Kienle and Marc Nelson



PARTY FISH. DJ Tuck Cheah and Ericka Fife

DJ BEAT. Pia Cabreira, Steve Mills and Rachel Soriano

GENERAL PATRONAGE. GP Reyes and Giselle Segovia

MODEL AIDE. Ton Lao and Val Delos Santos

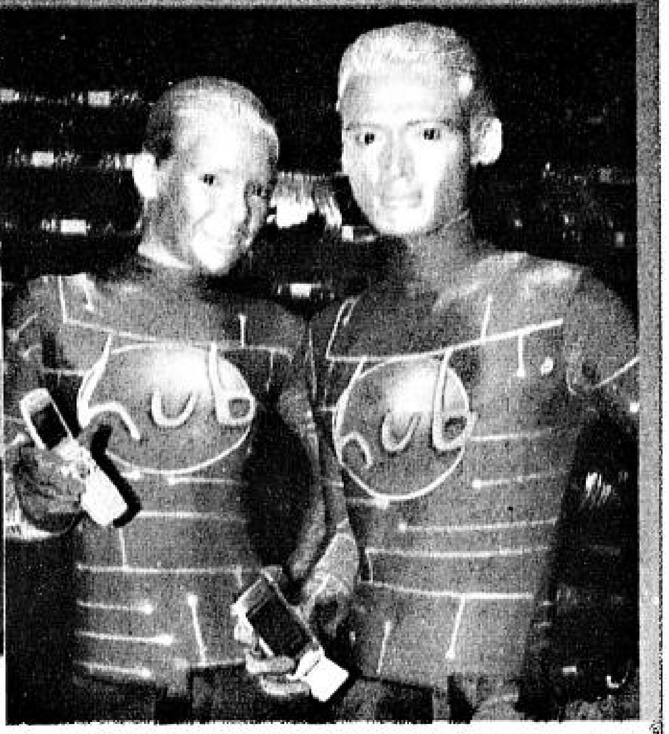
SCENE ROYALTY. Tony and Wendy Puyat-Hotung

YOGA STYLE. Jon Jon Rufino and Celine Lopez

POLITICAL PARTY. Audrey Aquino-Tan and Rep. Miguel Zubiri

FAB FOOD AND FASHION. Patrick Rosas, Margarita Fores and Inno Sotto

FASHION FRENZY. Jenni Epperson, Rajo Laurel and Stephanie Zubiri



THE HUB Trons, the tech-savvy spokesmodels of Globe Telecom showcased the Sony Ericsson Z600 and the P900 during the "Foie Gras and Truffle Degustation" at Pepato.

HUB-nobbing

WHAT do you get when you are served a meal that most people can only dream about, in the company of A listers, and by an A list company?

A *foie gras* and truffle feast was recently hosted by Globe telecom's Platinum Club, the Hub, and Sony Ericsson.

First of the five-course meal was goose liver balanced with a tangy touch of sweetness, mango sorbet and gelatina. Then followed a creamy seared *foie gras* in taglierini. Then Riso asparagus risotto and parmesan with a decadent drizzle of truffle oil uplifting the entire dish. Guests were incredibly pleased with the flawless and classic pan-roasted grouper fillet topped with cream of goose liver, Portobello mushrooms and roasted zucchini. An indulgence, to say the least, was still the main event, roast beef tenderloin with black truffle cream, leek hay and shavings of palm heart. And completing the meal was a black truffle gelato delicately served sweet, chilled to tickle the tongue.

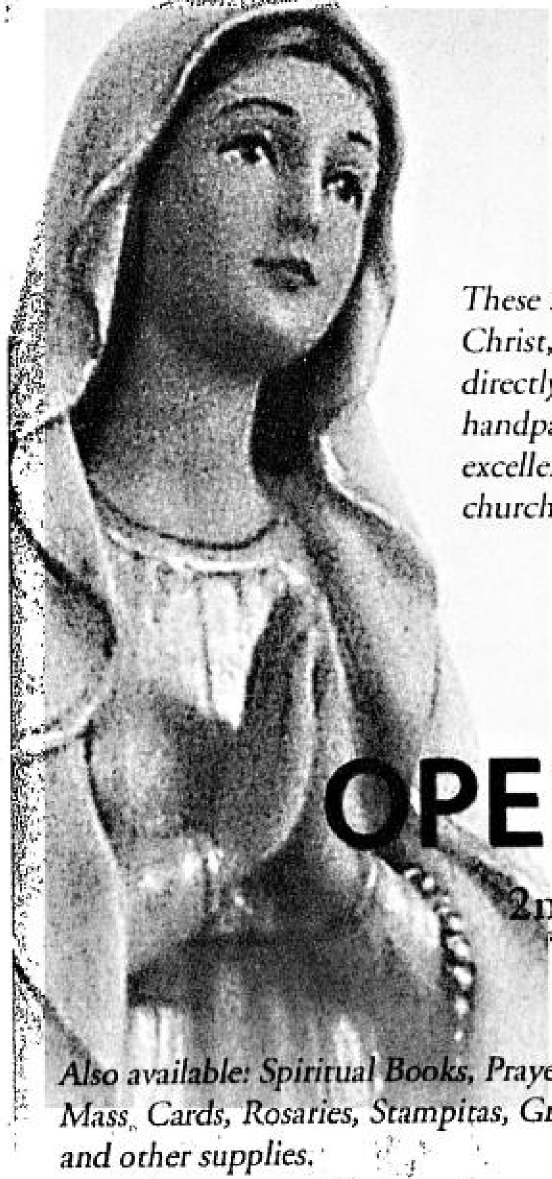
This exquisite *degustacion* was elegantly prepared by Margarita Fores hosted in Pepato, and served by strangely alluring, silver-coated "Hubtrons."

A LIST. Atom Henares

rogationists

rogate images

at Angelissimo ROBINSONS Galleria



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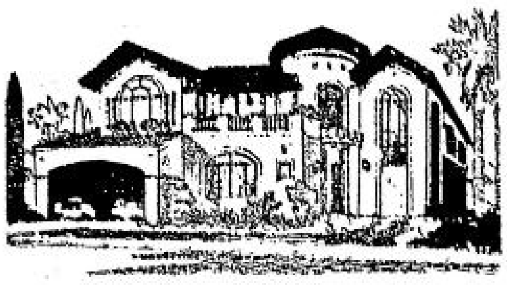
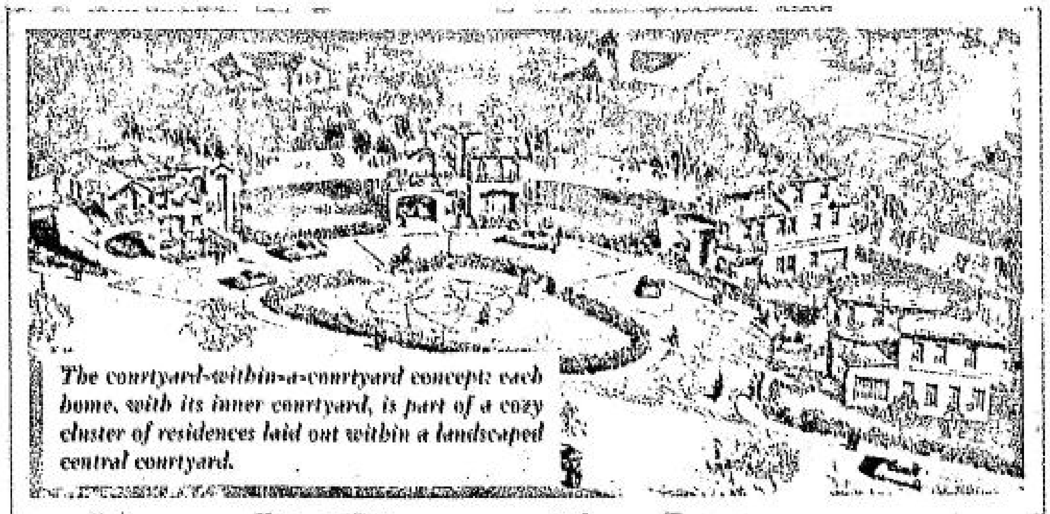
Brittany's Courtyards of Portofino brings the outdoors, indoors

Brittany Corporation, the country's pioneer in creating uniquely themed properties, recreates the finest of Italian living in Courtyards of Portofino.

Only minutes away from the Alabang Commercial Center, Courtyards of Portofino is the high-end residential enclave that brings to reality a "courtyard-within-à-courtyard" concept, an ingenious design exclusive to Brittany.

Every home features its own inner courtyard. The homes themselves are laid out within a landscaped central courtyard.


Rembrandt, the most spacious Portofino Courtyard residence, exudes a sense of comfort and taste, for living on a grand scale.


The courtyard-within-a-courtyard concept: each home, with its inner courtyard, is part of a cozy cluster of residences laid out within a landscaped central courtyard.

The open space of each home's courtyard ranges between 20 to 30 sq. m., allowing for natural light and cool air. This means the courtyards provide for the benefits of the outdoors, indoors.

The architectural features of the courtyard homes are distinctly Italian. Porticos, arches resting on columns that frame hallways surround the courtyard. Some units feature *casitas*, rooms at the ground level ideal for staying guests.

Rounded balconies, high ceilings, and majestic cupolas enhance the Italian look and feel of the courtyard homes, alongside the gardens, fountains, benches and cobblestone-accented streets.

Courtyards of Portofino offers a choice of four types of homes, each named after a European master artist, befitting the craftsmanship of each design.

- Cezanne, with a floor area of 193 sq. m., has a master's bedroom with a balcony, and a walk-in closet separating the bedroom from the toilet and bath.
- Monet, with bigger space, has a floor area of 233 sq. m. The house includes a *casita* on the ground floor and provisions for a family area on the third floor.
- Raphael, with a floor area of 249 sq. m., is a four-bedroom home with a family area on the third floor. Its courtyard connects to a lanai.
- Rembrandt, the most spacious model, has a floor area of 260 sq. m. The residence is accented with a trellis on the side of the "Balcon Arrandi" (rounded balcony) out in front. Inside, the staircase overlooks a cathedral-type window.

One of four ongoing developments of Brittany Corporation, Portofino, Italian for fine gateway, takes its name from the charming seaport town in southern Italy. Brittany's Portofino is aptly named, being strategically located near the Alabang entrance of the new Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-Laguna-Cavite Link Road.

The courtyard homes offer the benefits of the outdoors indoors including natural light and ventilation.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR INSIDE YOUR HOME

COURTYARDS
OF
Portofino

At Courtyards of Portofino, you can enjoy a breath of fresh air just by staying at home. The inner courtyard, a wide open space, lets in cool air and natural light. Surrounding the courtyard are porticos, arches found in classic Italian homes. Through the courtyard, you have access to the *casitas*, ground level rooms ideal for your guests. Outside, the cobblestone-accented roads and the flowers in terra cotta pots enhance the property's old world charm.

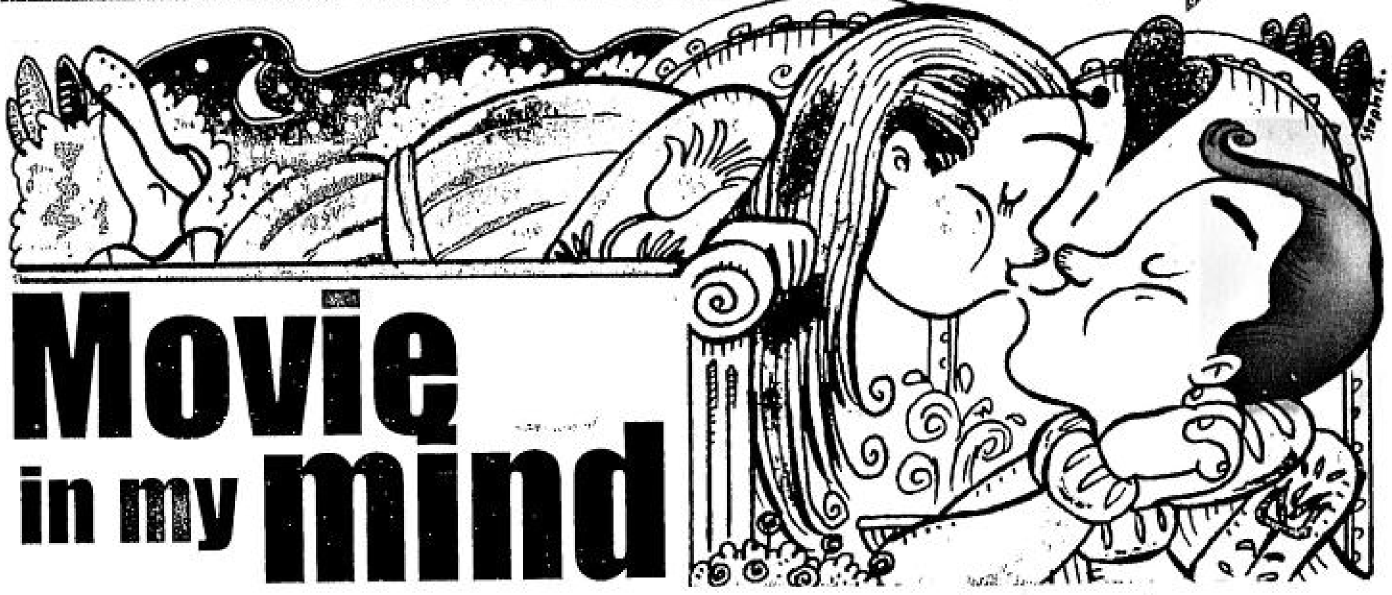
Moreover, the courtyard homes surround bigger, central courtyards. This makes for a courtyard-within-a-courtyard, an ingenious design that is uniquely Brittany.

Enjoy fresh air and everything good outdoors, right at home. Get a Property Preview.
Call 850 2868, 850 6986 or 850 3084. Or email us at mktg@brittany.com.ph.

Brittany
CORPORATION

The 6th Annual Ayala Malls Merchant Rewards

Movie in my mind



By Lino Cayetano

CINEMA owns a treasure trove of romantic characters, places, scenes and stories. Few people can imagine a couple walking hand-in-hand down the beach as the sun sets, a loner falling in love with the most popular girl on campus, or two lost souls gazing into each other's eyes as they talk under the stars on a cold summer's night, without some kind of reference to a popular film, video or television show.

Pop culture as dictated upon by market forces that control mediums of entertainment, such as most movies and television shows we see, have put a seal on and laid claim to many of our romantic fantasies. Our favorite actors have done numerous scenes and stories that have complimented the kind of romance we've come to love. Throw in local television together with Hollywood movies we've probably seen, in which thousands of these "moments" have been immortalized, standardized and packaged for consumption.

Understandably, art imitates life and life imitates art. With with the influence of television and cinema on the daily lives of Filipino, these images are often burned into our consciousness. Persons are stereotyped. Sometimes significant occurrences get to be treated like just another scene in a movie. We judge events and people as easily and as quickly as a film changes scenes. Life becomes a movie in people's minds.

> It need not be anything like one shown in theatres; it need not make perfect sense or fulfill certain requirements.

But in life, more than in fiction, stranger things often happen. Romance blossoms from an impossible situation. A character changes motives midway through a conversation. Anger erupts without motivation. The heart melts without the slightest provocation.

On a cold summer night two strangers talk as the stars shine above them. They exchange thoughts on love and life, and as soon as the conversation begins, it ends. As they watch a fog cover the stars, the night slowly grows into day and the story ends. Sometimes in life there is no visible coherence. There is no beginning, middle or end. But other times, a great story unfolds from an improbable plot.

Life can be represented in such great ways by all art forms. Film and television are two of our generation's most popular mediums with which to communicate ideas to a multitude of viewers with diverse life experiences and beliefs. They are popular, yet controversial and sensitive, mediums; the audience can change perceptions and convictions without so much as going through understanding.

Questions from love to religion and a person's understanding of the world around him can only be truly found and experienced through life—by setting out, meeting, talking to and being with other people, through moving, absorbing and experiencing all the energy and wonders that surround us.

The movies in our minds need not be anything like the ones we see in theatres. They don't have to make sense or fulfill certain requirements. We don't need to be homogenized so we can tap into wider markets. We just need to be ourselves so we can live life to the fullest.

Film, television and the visual arts can make strong statements. They can open our eyes and set our hearts on fire. They can make us leap for joy or weep in sorrow. They can tell us about life and teach us lessons on love. But the true test of a strong medium is, if it makes a person walk out of the room, step out of the door, telling himself: "I want to live and experience all this in my own life."

Set out. Rewrite that movie in your mind.

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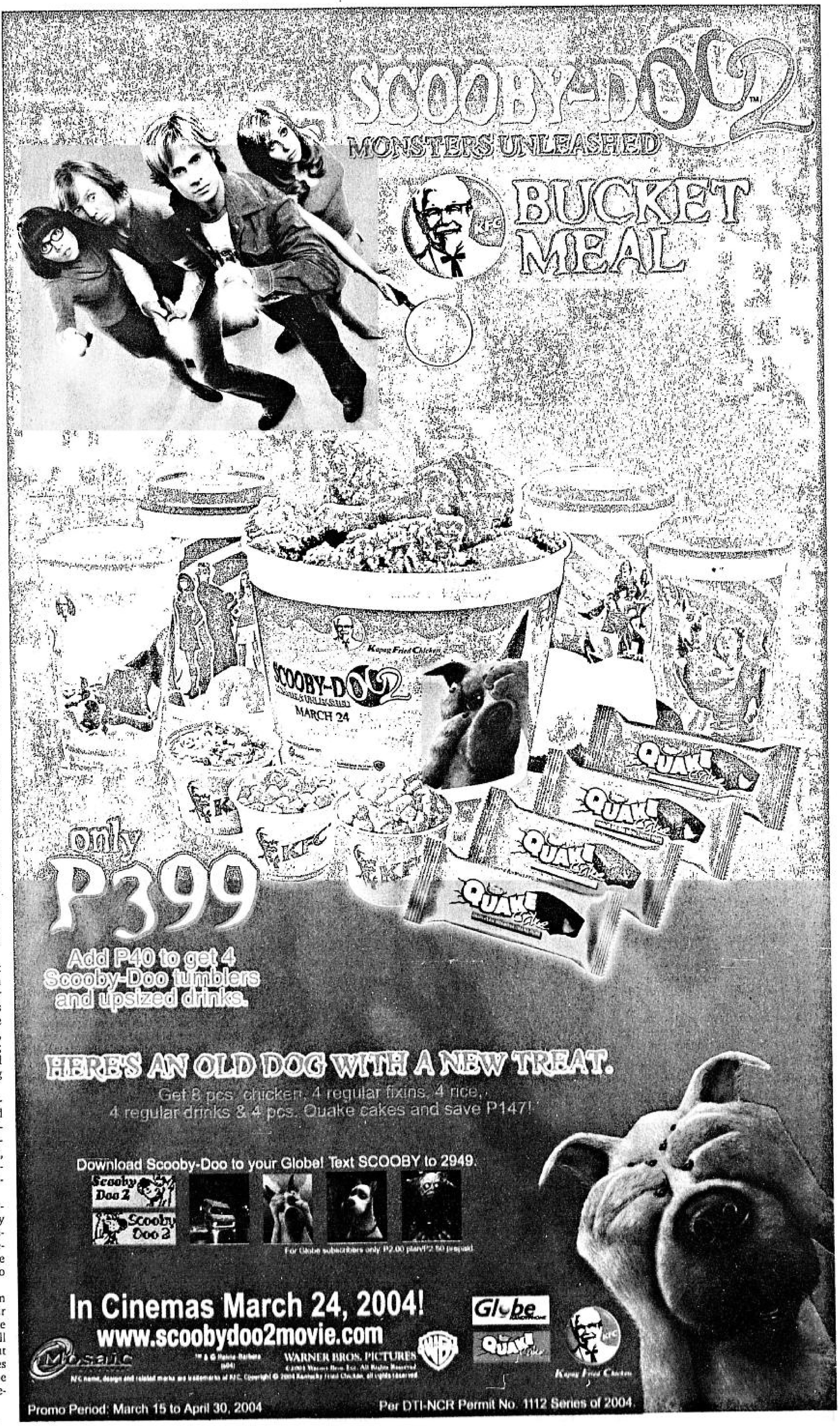
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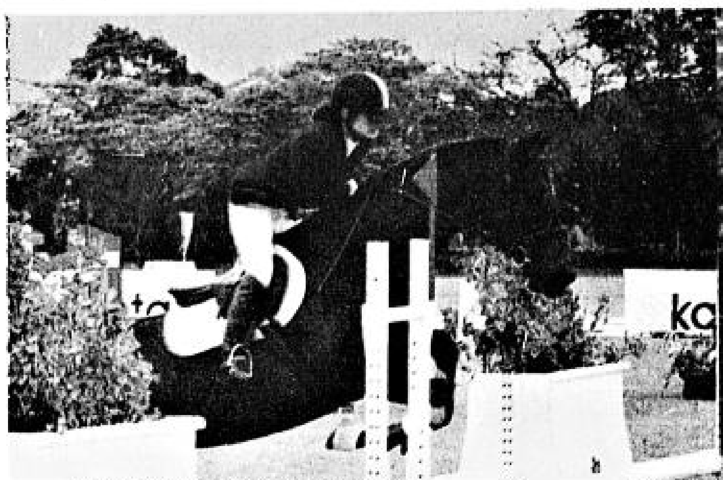


ALEXIS Cortes and Georgie

JEENA Lopez and Othello

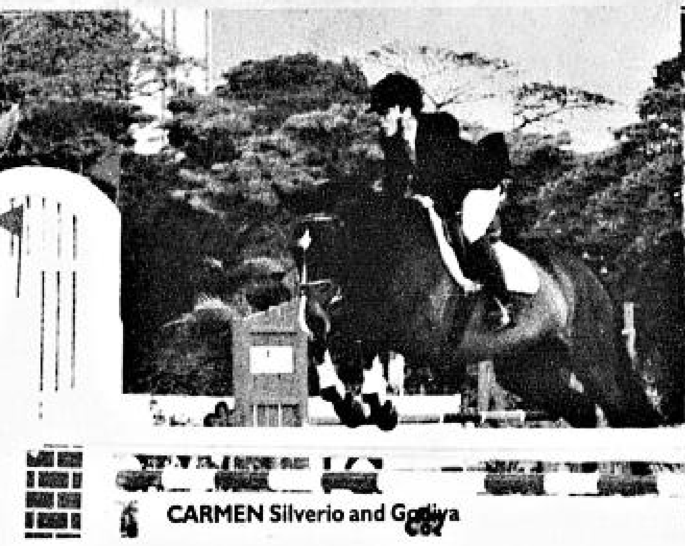
CHELSEA Co and Bazuric

ISABELLA Escano and Tomie

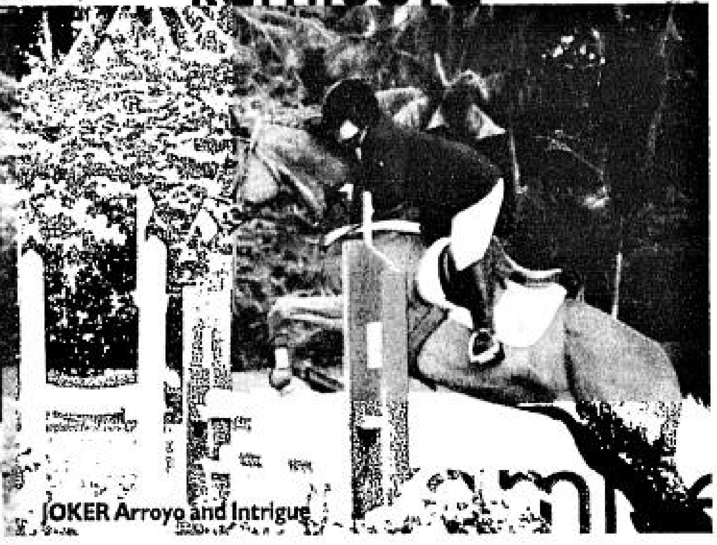
LAUREN Liechtenstein

VA-VA-VOOM. Vic Barba scores with his Boytoy

PHOTOS BY EDDIE BOY ESCUDERO



CARMEN Silverio and Godiva



JOKER Arroyo and Intrigue

Horsing around

Tim Yap

INTRIGUE. Boytoy. Budweiser. Calypso. Othello. Godiva. Fallacy. Characters from movies they are not. They were the "mane" attractions during last month's Kamiseta Show Jumping Championships at the Manila Polo Club.

According to the organizers: "The melodic grace of man and beast together as they skillfully negotiate the course is a powerful work of art. Since its first known emergence in Paris in 1866, show jumping competitions have steadily gathered an impressive show of luminaries and notable personalities that continue to grow with the sport."

Here on our local shores, Kamiseta—the brand known for its **Alicia Silverstone** and **Natalie Portman** ad campaigns joined hands with the front runners of the horsey set—**Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski** and **Toni Leviste**, both immortalized as Olympians and true-blue horse lovers. "I love my horse more than any man," Toni once told this writer.

She has reason to. Because no man has a heart as big. Sure, a few men will jump through hurdles for their woman (or man), but how many would do it with such grace, at the crack of the whip?

For the first time, riders and their horses were given due credit. Kamiseta's first couple, **Gunn** and **Cris Roque**, provided giant checks symbolizing prize money for the winning riders. The horses got a pat on the back. The most coveted items that night were the bootylicious boot bags that Kamiseta made especially for the equestrians.

Hollywood and horses

A pastel sea of enthusiasts—friends and families of the participants—applauded their bets. "I've never seen this huge a turnout for the sport," I overheard one of the organizers saying. In a furry cowboy hat, **Tessa Prieto-Valdes** did the half-time route and hosted games, quizzing the guests on their knowledge about the brand that counts Hollywood and horses among its inspirations.

MTV VJ **Cindy Kurleto** surveyed the afternoon's fashion situation as she cantered among the guests.

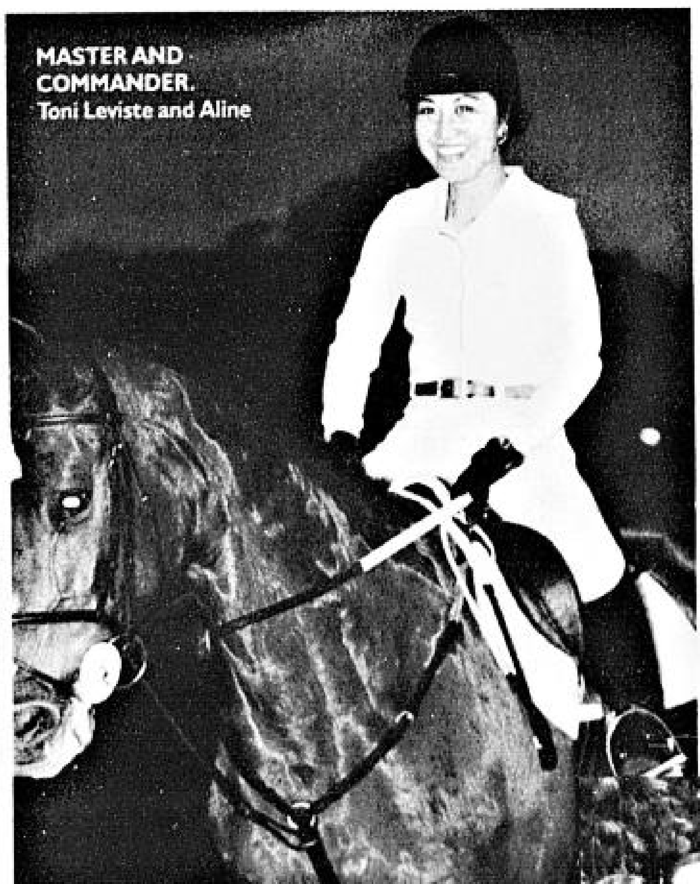
Designer **Vic Barba** displayed his other known skill. To her fully feathered sports cap, newbie **Jeena Lopez** added yet another. A show down between Mikee Cojuangco- "Jahorsey" and "My Little Toni" became the highlight of the affair. But what grabbed my attention were the young riders.

Beautiful creatures, popular fashion, friendly competition

They exuded much grace and fluidity—a style that even their predecessors admire. "This is why we are doing this," said Mikee as she posed for a snapshot with young rider **Chelsea Co.** Other noteworthy members of this breed include **Joker Arroyo** (the senator's grandson), **Mikeli O' Leary, Danni Virata, Alexis Cortes, Bea Rocha, Isabelle Escano, Lorraine Reynolds, Carmen Silverio and Diego Lorenzo**—all destined for bigger saddles.

Evening descended, and the guests gathered around the front area of the Polo field where the stables were filled with tables groaning with food and drink.

Beautiful creatures, popular fashion, friendly competition—more than enough for anyone to have a galloping good time.

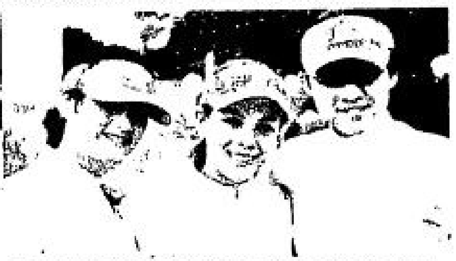


MASTER AND COMMANDER. Toni Leviste and Aline

ALL IN THE FAMILY. Cris Roque, Alex Roque, Gunn Roque, Chelsea Co and Mikee Jaworski

CINDY Kurleto gallops away

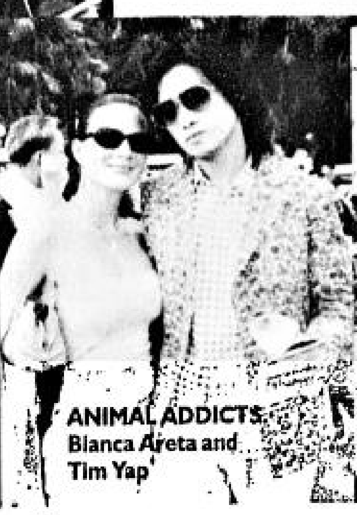
YOUNG AND RESTLESS. Regina Yulo, Shinead King and Lauren Liechtenstein



PRETTY YOUNG THINGS. Alexis Cortes, Chelsea Co., and Mikeli O'Leary

PASTEL PALS. Candice Roque, Anna Palabyab and Raymond Rufino

MANE EVENT. Alex Escat, Bea Rocha and Jenny Park



ANIMAL ADDICTS. Bianca Areta and Tim Yap

AMISETA WATCH. Marsha and Patty Morato

METRO COVER. Tess Prieto-Valde Blade and ena Lopez

The 6th Annual MERCHANT REWARDS

AYALA CENTER · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU
AYALA MALLS Lovemall!

co-presented by MasterCard

Winners all!

EVERYBODY loves a winner. And at the Ayala Malls, every mall lover is guaranteed to be in one.

Early evening of March 2, the recipients of the 6th Ayala Malls Merchant Rewards received not just plaques and trophies worthy of top shelf display, but more importantly industry-wide recognition for their achievements in innovation, management and marketing in three of the Philippines' premiere and most competitive commercial locations: Ayala Centers Makati (Glorietta 1 to 4, Parksquare 1 and 2, Greenbelt 1 to 4 and 6750), Alabang Town Center, and Ayala Center Cebu.

For the past six years, the Ayala Malls Merchant Rewards Program has fostered the growth of the Ayala Malls establishments by giving due recognition to those whose achievements in innovation, management and marketing have served as worthy examples for other retailers to follow.

This elite group of past Store of the Year winners include Guess (Ayala Center Makati) in 1998, Bench (Ayala Center Makati) and Baby Guess (Ayala Center Cebu) in 1999, Kamiseta (Ayala Center Makati), Guess Flagship Store (Alabang Town Center), Rustan's (Ayala Center Cebu), Bench (1st Ayala Malls Grand Store of the Year) in 2000, Bench (Ayala Center Makati), Bayo (Alabang Town Center), and Penshoppe (Ayala Center Cebu) in 2001, and Bayo (Ayala Center Makati), Olympic World (Alabang Town Center), Alberto (Ayala Center Cebu), and Olympic Village/World (2nd Ayala Malls Grand Store of the Year) in 2002.

In cocktail ceremonies co-presented by MasterCard at the Greenbelt 3 Park, over a hundred merchant establishments located in the three Ayala commercial centers were awarded in the following categories: Visual Merchandising Excellence; Marketing Excellence; Store Operations, and Store of the Year (See box for this year's winners). Entertainment numbers were provided by celebrity diva Zsa Zsa Padilla and Silk Band and was hosted by Christine Bersola

The Visual Merchandising Excellence Award recognizes Ayala Malls merchants for their efforts and enthusiasm in delivering engaging, creative and visual merchandising display in their outlets. Included in this category is the special Christmas Decoration Special Award; Judges for this category were entrepreneur and Centex volunteer Catherine "Kit" Zobel de Ayala, multi-awarded broadcast journalist Ces Orena-Drilon, fashion director and producer Ariel Lozada, fashion editor and stylist Michael Salientes, and Philippine Star Lifestyle section columnist Mons Romulo-Tantoco.

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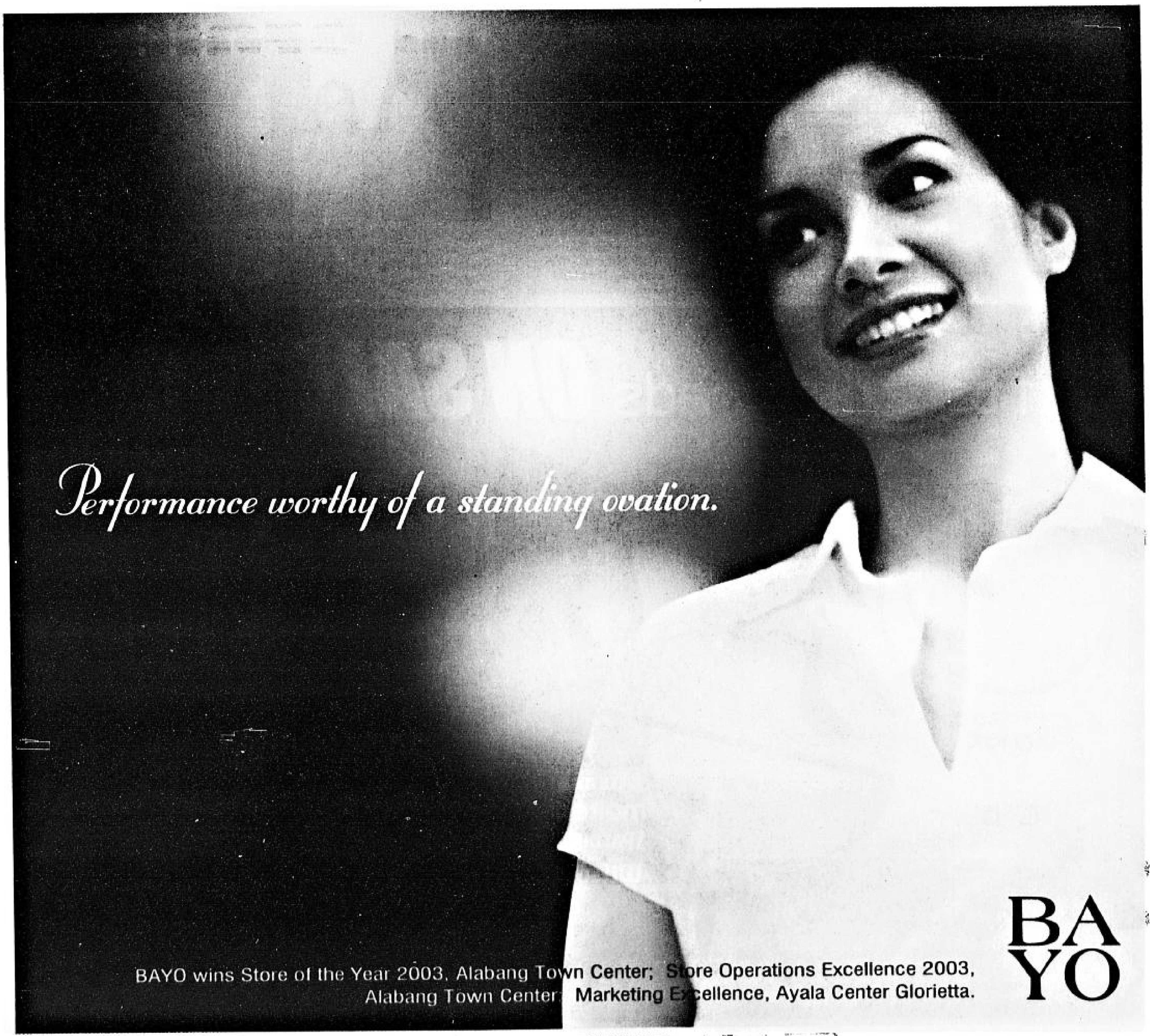
This year, a special award for the Most Promising Retailer was added to the awards list. In this category, seven establishments were named.

STORE OF THE YEAR

CARBON - AYALA CENTER MAKATI
From left, Fernando Zobel de Ayala, chair, Ayala Land; Miriam O. Katigbak - senior vice president and group head, Commercial Centers Group of Ayala Land Inc; Raul Francisco, Carbon; Francisco H. Licuanan III, president, Ayala Land Inc.

BAYO - ALABANG TOWN CENTER
From left, Fernando Zobel de Ayala, chair, Ayala Land; Miriam O. Katigbak, senior vice president and group head, Commercial Centers Group of Ayala Land Inc; Camillo Bitong, Bayo and Francisco H. Licuanan III, president, Ayala Land Inc.

LEVI'S - AYALA CENTER CEBU
From left, Rene Almendras, president, Cebu Holdings Inc; Tess Albulario, Levi's; Miriam O. Katigbak, senior vice president and group head, Commercial Centers Group of Ayala Land Inc; Fernando Zobel de Ayala chair, Ayala Land; Francisco H. Licuanan III, president, Ayala Land Inc.


Performance worthy of a standing ovation.
BAYO wins Store of the Year 2003, Alabang Town Center; Store Operations Excellence 2003, Alabang Town Center; Marketing Excellence, Ayala Center Glorietta.
BAYO

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co-presented by MasterCard

AYALA CENTER · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU
AYALA MALLS LoveMall!

We all!

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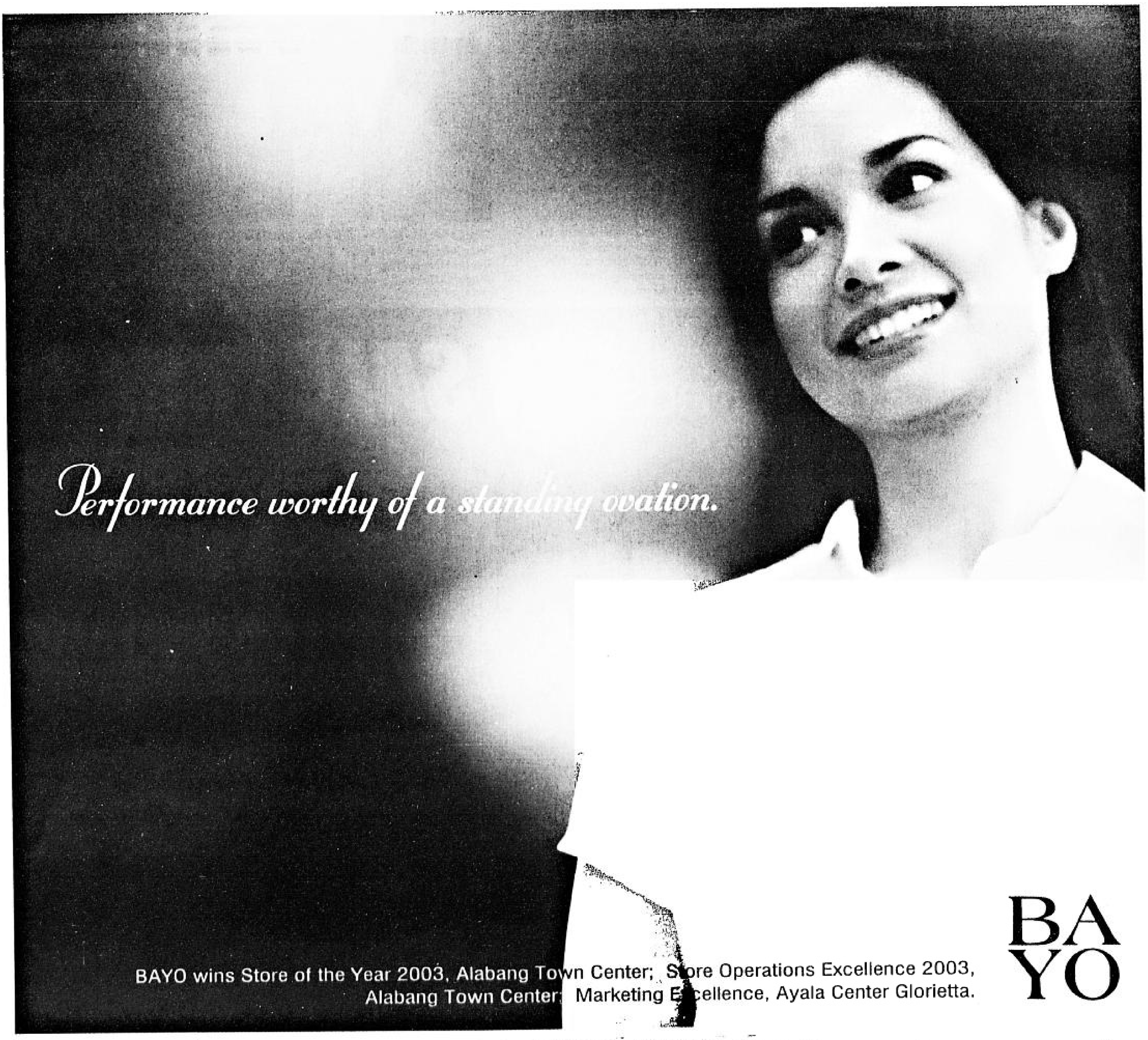
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BAYO

Annual Merchant Rewards

co-presented by

AYALA CENTER · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MasterCard

STORE OPERATIONS EXCELLENCE WINNERS

AYALA CENTER CEBU
From left: Rowena Tomeldan, AVP - operations, ALI; Elizabeth Quiambao, Store Specialists Inc - Lacoste; Tess Albulario, Levi's; Bebilon Cruz Espino, Oro China; John Justo Villamiel, Artwork; Steve Sarmenta, Marks & Spencer and Cristina Angan, center manager - Ayala Center Cebu.

ZSA Zsa Padilla

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
From left: Javi Hernandez, ATC; Camillo Bitong, Bayo; lawyer Paul Santos, Picture City; Trickie Lopa, Orange Juice; Vangie Sulit, Baby Guess; Rose Ann Bautista, Fino; Rowena Romeldan, AVP-ALI.

AYALA CENTER MAKATI
From left: Ricky Gutierrez, Sentro 1771; Lorna Ambas, LJC Group; Kay So, The Body Shop; Raul Francisco, Carbon; Frido Ong, Lacoste Shoes; Elizabeth Quiambao, Store Specialists Inc; Kathreen Buan, Yellow Cab Pizza; Rose Ann Bautista, Fino; Virgilio Lim, Bench; Andrew Triviño, Firma and Toby Claudio, Toby's Sports Arena

MOST PROMISING RETAILERS

From left: Rowena Tomeldan, AVP - ALI Commercial Center Group; Jaime Daez Montage; Ruth Velasco-Co, Max Brenner; Wendy Puyat, Lily; Patrick Pesangco, Hobbes; Walden Chu, Red Box; Michael Quezon, Isis; Martin Silverio, Flame It and Winnie Nazareth - AVP-marketing, Ayala Land Commercial Centers Group.

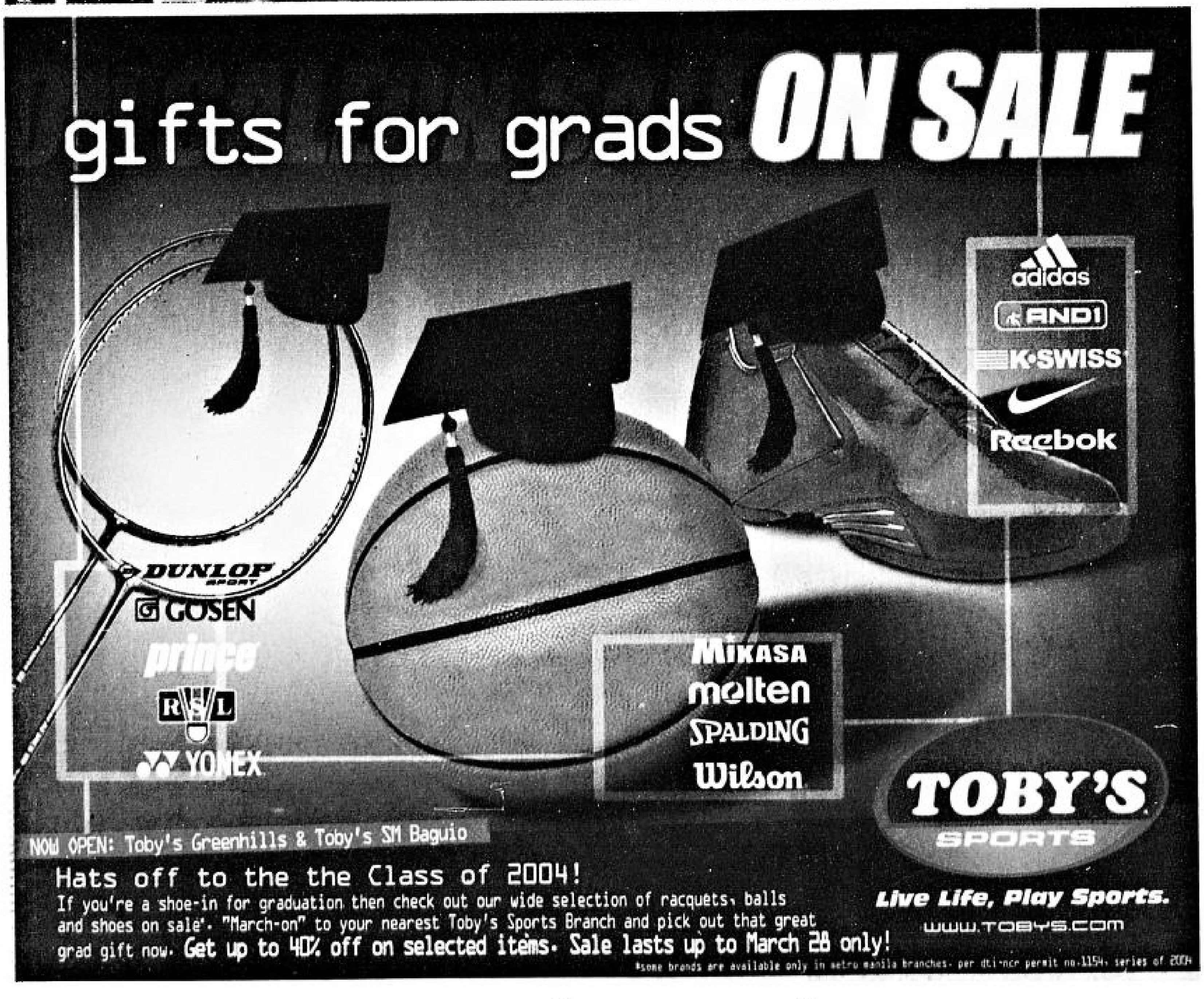
MARKETING EXCELLENCE

OVERALL MARKETING EXCELLENCE WINNER - BENCH
From left: Nonah Gacrama, Ayala Center Cebu; Maricris Bernardino, marketing manager - Alabang Town Center; Cathy Bengzon - ad and promo manager Ayala Center Makati; Virgilio Lim, Bench and Winnie Nazareth - AVP-marketing, Ayala Land Commercial Centers Group.

MERIT AWARDEES
From left: Nonah Gacrama, Ayala Center Cebu; Maricris Bernardino, marketing manager, Alabang Town Center; Cathy Bengzon, ad and promo manager, ALI; Virgilio Lim, Bench and Winnie Nazareth, AVP - marketing, Ayala Land.

AYALA MALL SPECIFIC WINNERS
From left: Nonah Gacrama, Ayala Center Cebu; Maricris Bernardino, marketing manager, Alabang Town Center; Winnie Nazareth, AVP-marketing, Ayala Land Commercial Centers Group; Lily Ann Favis, Toby's Sports Arena; Joseph Kiamseng, Sari-Sari; Andrew Tribiño, Firma; Ito Kish, Kish and Kathy Bengzon, ad and promo manager, Ayala Center Makati.

SPECIAL AWARD - BEST IN VALUES MARKETING
From left: Virgie Ramos, Gift Gate; Tina Esguerra - marketing division manager, Ayala Center Makati; Mercedita Nolledo -EVP, ALI; Cito Recto, True Value Home Center and Diogenes Gueco, Kameraworld.



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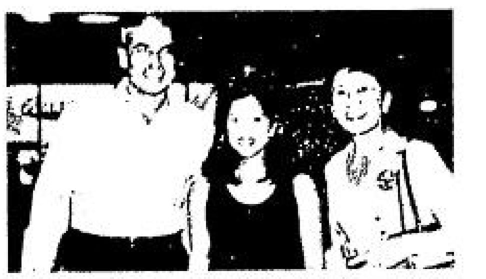

From left: Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Catherine Zobel de Ayala and Miriam Katigbak, SVP Ayala Land, Inc.

From left: Gigi Mabanta, Louis Vuitton; Javi Hernandez, Alabang Town Center and Elizabeth Quiambao, Store Specialists, Inc.

Miguel Pastor, Bench and Wendy Puyat, Hotung, Lily

The Annual Merchant Rewards

co-presented by

List of Winners

	AYALA CENTER MAKATI	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
VISUAL MERCHANDISING EXCELLENCE			
Apparel Foreign	Paul Smith	Top Shop	Giordano
Apparel Local	Folded & Hung	Orange Juice	Loalde
Shoes/Leathergoods Foreign	Louis Vuitton	Shoe Salon	Nine West
Shoes/Leathergoods Local	Carbon	Fino	Mendrez
Specialty	Kish	Picture Co.	The Homemaker
Service	First Aid	I Pose	Globe Telecom
Dept. Store/Jr. Anchor	Rustan's	Marks & Spencer	
Overall Visual Merchandising Excellence Winner	*LOUIS VUITTON*	*FINO*	*LOALDE*
Christmas Décor			
Retail	Firma	Marlboro Classics - winner Kamiseta - runner-up	Tropical Relik
Food	Bizu	Carl's Jr.	Idea Italia
Cart	Mini Donuts	Coffee Experience	Potato Corner
Hotel	New World Renaissance Hotel	n/a	n/a
Dept. Store/Jr. Anchor	Rustan's	Marks & Spencer	n/a
MARKETING EXCELLENCE Ayala Mall Specific	Kish Firma	Toby's Sports	Sari-Sari
Overall Marketing Excellence Winner		*BENCH*	
MERIT AWARDS		Bayo Levi's	
Values Special Award	Gift Gate	Kameraworld	True Value Homecenter
MARKETING PARTNERS			
	Bench	Bench	M. Lhuillier Jeweller
	Big & Small Co.	Human	Bigby's Café
	Gift Gate	Guess	Ratsky
	Jag	Kamiseta	Fashion Avenue
	Burger King	Terrie's Boutique	Timezone
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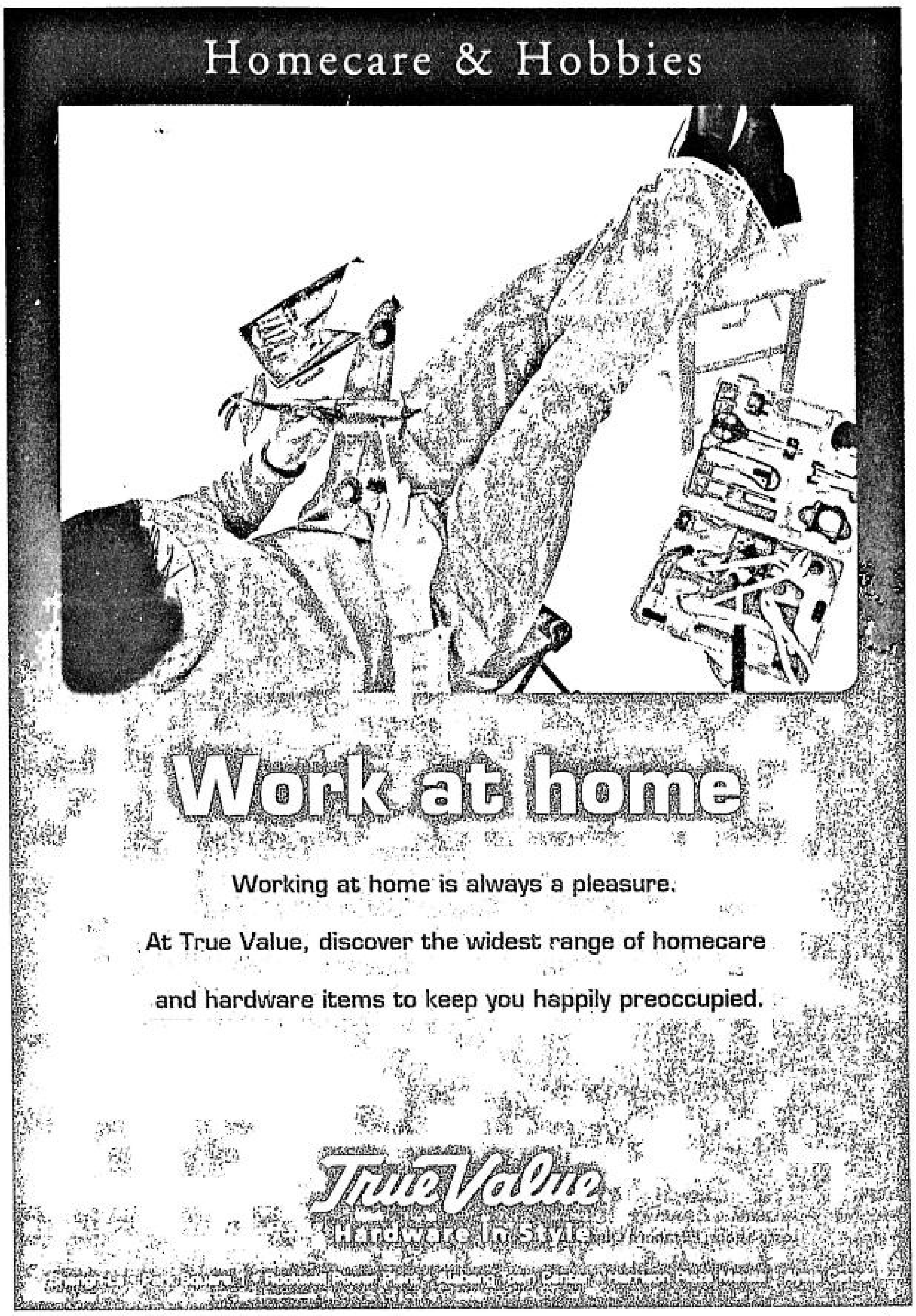
	Bench TGIFriday's	TGIFriday's Cinderella	Metro Ayala Center Guess
	Goodwill Bookstore California Pizza Kitchen	Olympic World Bench	Fashion Avenue Giordano
	General Photo Express	True Value Homecenter	Junrex Cellphones
	Toytown	California Pizza Kitchen	Marithe Francois Girbaud
	Kamiseta	Tower Records	True Value Homecenter
	True Value Homecenter	Gift Gate	Planet Sports
	Tower Records	Picture City	Rusty Lopez
	Cinderella	Guess	Celine
MOST PROMISING RETAILER	Red Box Max Brenner Montage Lily	Hobbes	ISIS Flame It
STORE OPERATIONS EXCELLENCE			
	Her Bench	Picture City	Artwork
	Yellow Cab Pizza	Bayo	Lacoste
	Toby's Sports Arena	Orange Juice	Oro China
	Fino	Fino	Levi's
	Lacoste Shoes	Baby Guess	Marks & Spencer
	The Body Shop		
	Café Havana		
	Sentro 1771		
	Carbon		
	Firma		
STORE OF THE YEAR	*CARBON*	*BAYO*	*LEVI'S*

From left: Jimmy I. Ayala, ALI; Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Bobby Claudio and Lily Ann Favis of Toby's

From left: Mercedita S. Nolledo, EVP, Ayala Land Inc; Francisco Licuanan III, president, Ayala Land Inc Poch Villareal, MasterCard International and Rene Almendras, president, Cebu Holdings Inc.

From left: Fernando Zobel de Ayala, chair, Ayala Land Inc; Catherine Zobel de Ayala, Winnie Nazareth, AVP marketing, Ayala Land Inc Commercial Centers Group; and Rowena Tomeldan, AVP-operations, Ayala Land Inc, Commercial Centers Group



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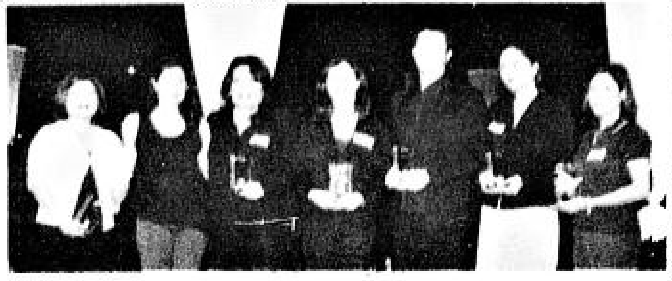
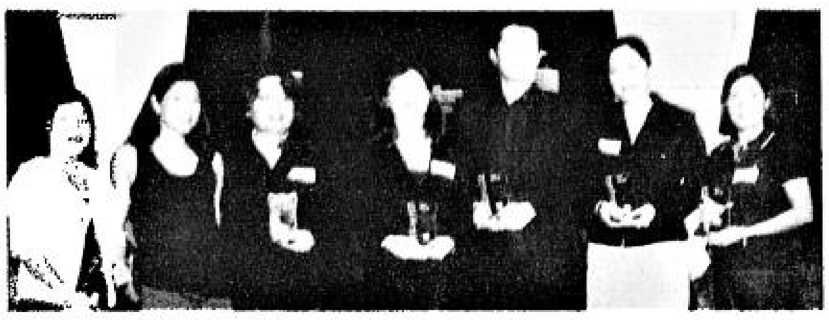
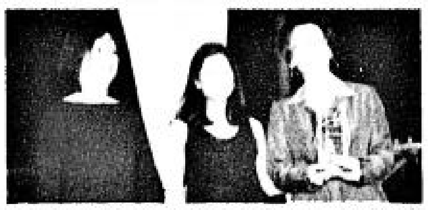
From left: Carlo Rufino of Paul Smith; Ronald Pineda of Folded & Hung; Ito Kish of Kish; Catherine Zobelde Ayala; Gigi Mabanta of Louis Vuitton; Raul Francisco of Carbon; Larry Talósa of Rustans; Vivian Jose, Merchandise Mix manager - ALI-CCG and Brian Lim of First Aid.



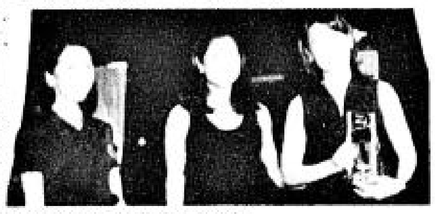
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
From left: Johnson Go - Top Shop; Monet Aluquin - Alabang Town Center; Catherine Zobel de Ayala; Eileen Grey - The Picture Co; Catherine Gaerlan - Shoe Salon; Rose Ann Bautista - Fino; Steve Sarmenta - Marks & Spencer; Diogenes Gueco - I-Pose; Trickie Lopa - Orange Juice.



AYALA CENTER CEBU
From left: Clavel Tongco, Ayala Center Cebu; Catherine Zobel de Ayala, Elizabeth Quiambao, Stores Specialists Inc, Joyce Sia, Giordano; Christopher Aldeguer, Loalde and Gina Santos, Mendrez



OVERALL WINNER - AYALA CENTER MAKATI
From left: Vivian Jose, Merchandise Mix manager, Catherine Zobel de Ayala and Gigi Mabanta, Louis Vuitton



TOWN CENTER - FINO
From left: Monet Aluquin, Alabang Town Center; Catherine Zobel de Ayala; Rose Ann Bautista, Fino.

OVERALL WINNER FOR AYALA CENTER CEBU
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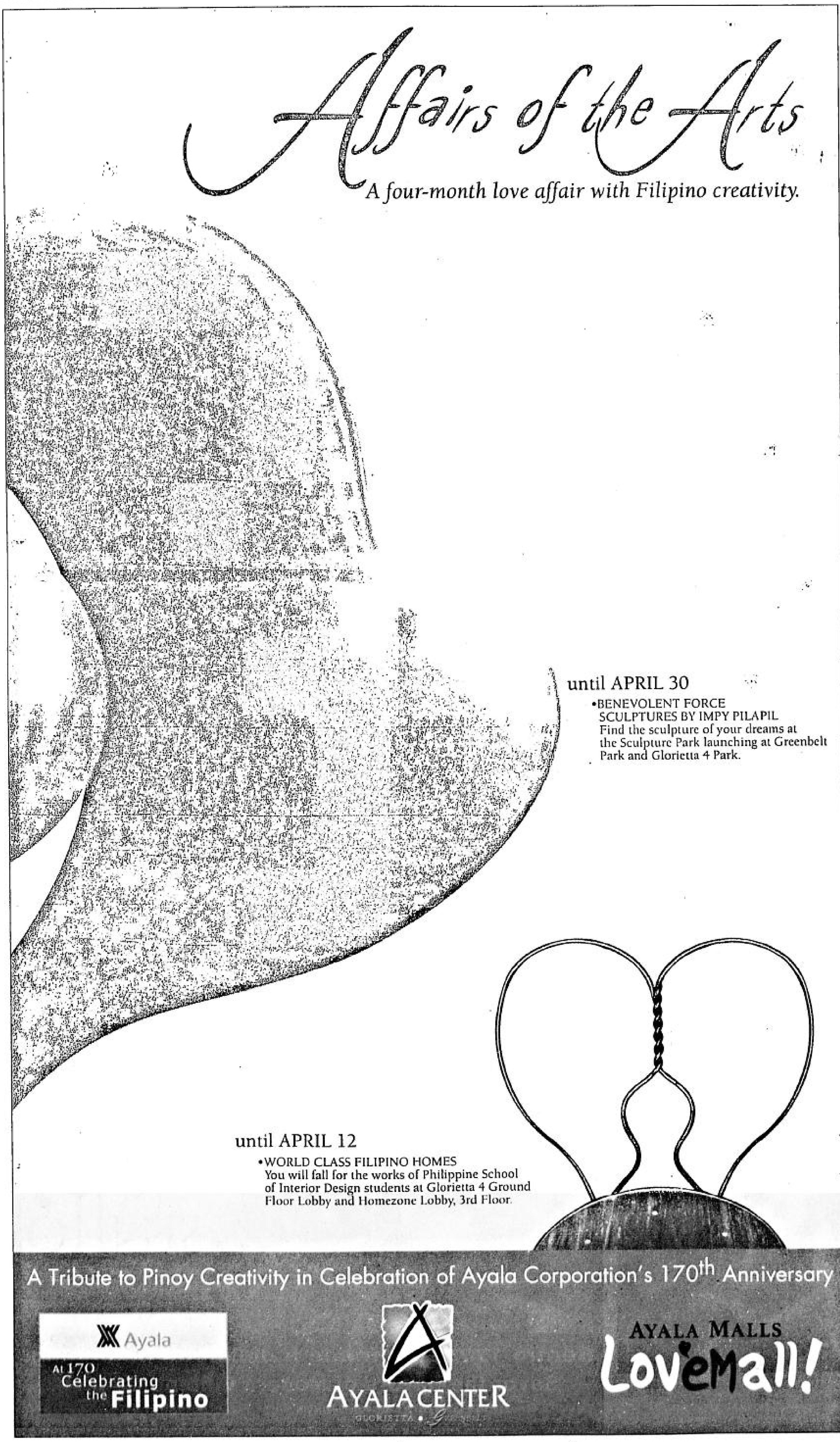
From left: Michael Salientes, Ariel Lozada, Ces Drilon, Carlson Chua of Bench

From left: Carlson Chua of Bench, Myrna Fernandez, Rowena Tomeldan, Cristy Comia, Winnie Nazareta and Miguel Pastor of Bench

From left: Eileen Mangubat, publisher, Cebu Daily News; Marlinda Angbetic Tan, Lifestyle executive editor, The Freeman and Cristy Comia, division manager, Ayala Land Inc.

From left: Trickie Lopa, Orange Juice; vicky Powell, Spin and Joanna Ongpin-Duarte, Big n' Small Co.

From left: Rowena Tomeldan, AVP-operations ALI,CCG; Virgie Ramos, Gift Gate; Tina Esguerra, marketing division manager, ALI-CCG and Cathy Bengzon, ad & promo manager, Ayala Center, Makati



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From left: Carlson Chan, Bench; Myrna Fernandez, Greenbelt Center manager; Rowena Tomeldan, AVP-operation, ALI-CCG; Cristy Comia, division manager, ALI-CCG; Winnie Nazareth, AVP-marketing, ALI-CCG and Miguel Pastor, Bench

Rommel Bautista and Rose Ann Bautista

Ayala Center Makati's Store of the Year, Carbon

From left: Miriam Katigbak, senior vice president and group head, Commercial Centers Group Ayala Land Inc; Mercedita S. Nolledo; CJ Jesena, division manager of Ayala Land and Millet Mananquil

From left: Joseph Kiamseng, Desiree Kiamseng and Myra Kiamseng, Marketing Excellence Ayala Mall Specific Winner for Ayala Center Cebu- Sari-Sari

From left: Patrick Pasengco, Hobbes, Myrna Fernandez, Greenbelt Center manager; Francis Roxas Market Market and Federick Sy, Seattle's Best

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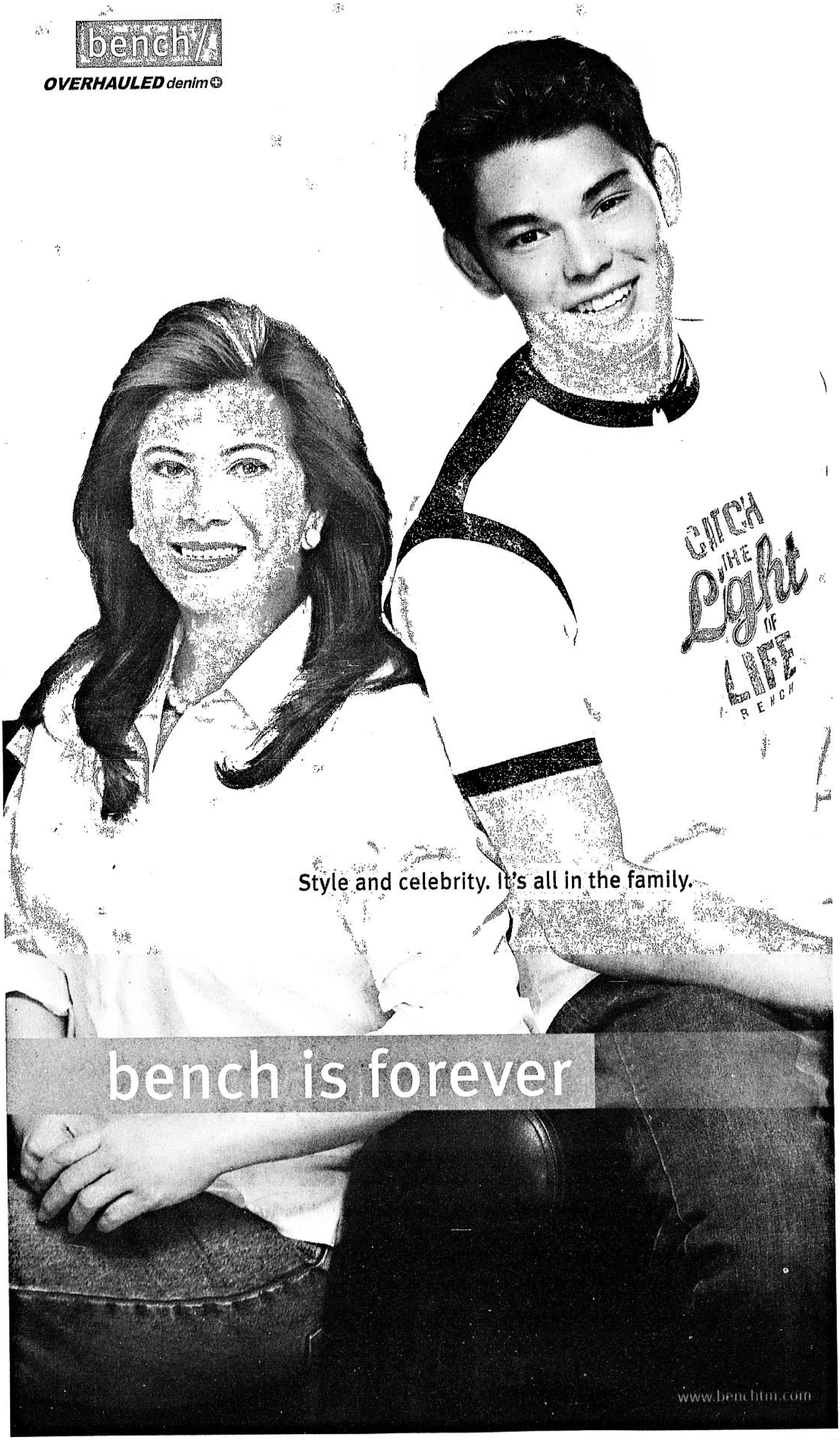
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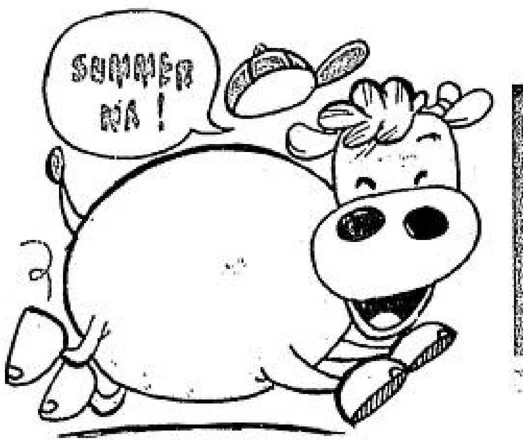

E-mail: pr_junior_inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Junior Inquirer Special

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004 ✦ 8 PAGES ✦ VOLUME I, NUMBER 11

WHAT'S INSIDE:

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- Your Poetry Page 4
- Things to Do in Summer Page 5
- Shirley's Pets, The Lunch Box, and Atomo and Weboy Page 7
- Check out these cool summer workshops! Page 8

SCHOLASTICANS ON-STAGE AT THE CCP

By Eline Santos

AFTER a long wait for their turn on stage, this year's sixth-graders from St. Scholastica's College in Manila will stage their first production at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on March 31.

Every year, St. Scho sixth-graders put together a production of William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" under the direction of Ms Naty Crame-Rogers.

This year is special because, for the first time, the production will be held at the CCP as a tribute to their school principal, Ms Florina Castillo. Ms Castillo implemented the Drama-in-Education program and is retiring this year.

The cast members say they are all very excited and proud to be part of the production.

"After seven years, it finally came true. It's a most awaited event," says 12-year-old Nel Muriel Lee, who plays the fairy queen Titania.

Dream Roles

The productions are such a big event that as early as a year or two before, the girls already set their eyes on certain roles.

"Since Grade 5, I've been practicing for this role. I wanted to be Helena," says 12-year-old Queenie Cocjin, one of the lucky few who got her dream part.

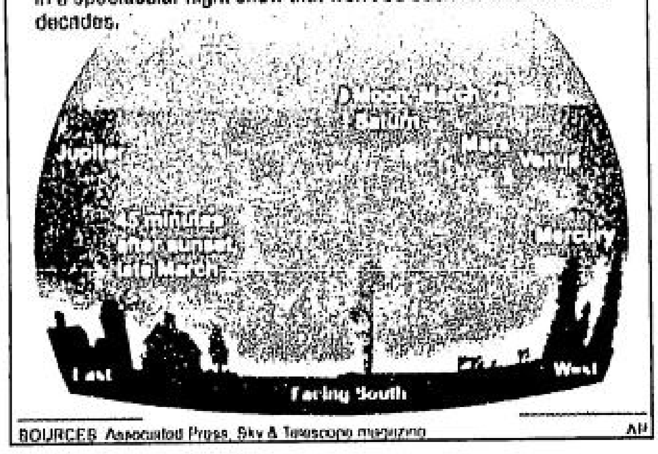
Since there are no boys at St. Scho, the girls play the men as well.

Scholasticans/ p. 7

DUKE Theseus with Queen Hippolyta addresses his court of nobles. Demetrius and Helena stand on their left; Hermia and Lysander are on the right. Egeus and Philostrate sit at their feet. RUDY ESPERAS

Five planets arrayed across evening sky

For the next two weeks, the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn should be easily visible at dusk, along with the moon, in a spectacular night show that won't be back for another three decades.



SOURCES: Associated Press, Sky & Telescope magazine AP

Rare Five-Planet Alignment Visible

FIVE planets are arrayed across the evening sky in a spectacular night show that won't be back for another three decades.

On the last week of March and the first few days of April, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—the five closest planets—should be easily visible at dusk, along with the moon.

"It's semi-unique," said Myles Standish, an astronomer at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, USA. "They're all on the same side of the sun and stretched across the sky and that's what is kind of pretty." *AP*

Hocus Pocus Focus!

Marikina, Pasig kids win poster-making contest

By Eline Santos

FOCUS won the day for Aleli Razo and Jefferson Matro in an NCR-wide inter-school poster-making competition.

Aleli and Jefferson each competed in their respective categories against 13 other finalists from the 14 divisions of the National Capital Region.

The theme of the contest was "Paglalarawan sa Kagandahang Asal ng

Hocus/ p. 7

BATCH 2004: GROWING UP

GRADUATION day is finally here. Before closing one chapter and opening a new one, graduating students share their thoughts on growing up.

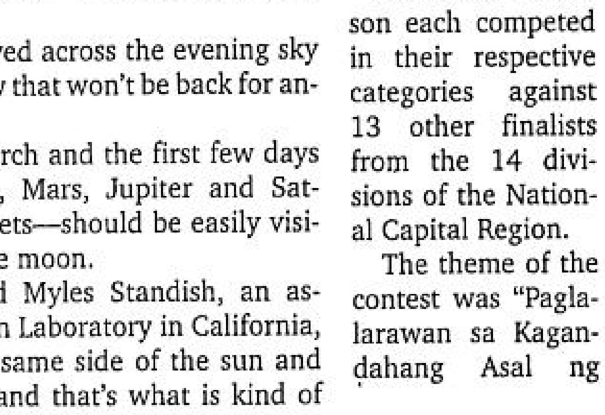
Self-discovery, a common theme among the kids, was the most important "lesson" for Mikael Kelvin So.

"You will not succeed in life if you don't know who you are, what you want, and what you need," says the valedictorian of Theresiana de Montealegre Dame School in Muntinlupa.

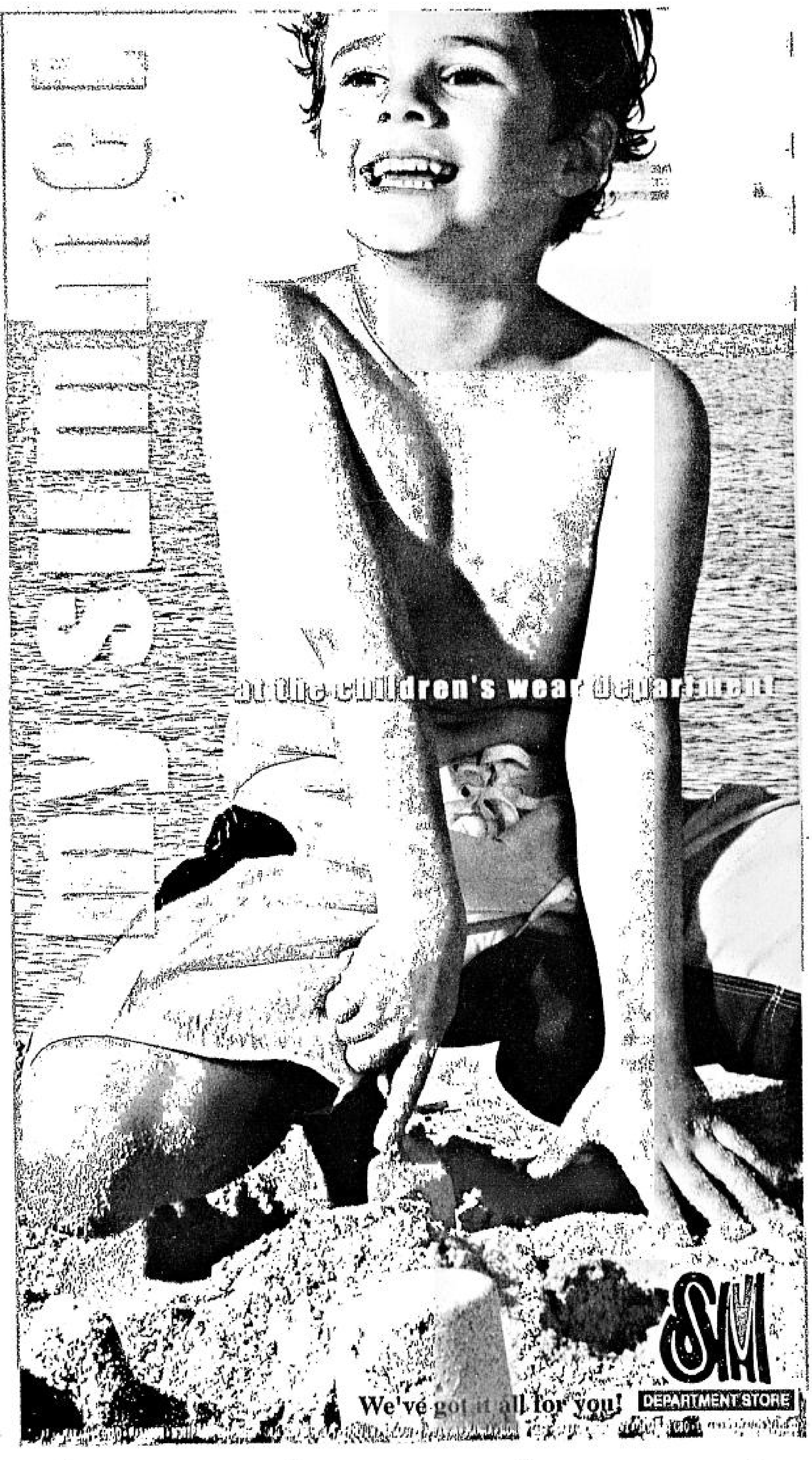
Sixth-grader Juan Rafael Roque of San Beda College, Manila discovered more of himself by trying out new things. He found a new talent when he became campaign manager for their pupils' government.

"I was able to do introductions for 11 people in two to three hours, exploring new ways of introducing them as future lead-

Batch/ p. 6



JARED, Nel, Rafael, Clarice & Ton Ton. RUDY ESPERAS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Child-Friendly Awardee
UNICEF-PPI CHILD-FRIENDLY NEWSPAPER AND JOURNALIST AWARDS
2003 Best Children's Newspaper Awardee

Kudos, Graduates

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But no matter how much you know already, learning is a life-long thing. You can learn through reading books, listening to people, or trying out new things.

If you've been thinking of trying something out but were a little shy, pluck up your courage and plunge in. You might be delighted at the new things you learn about yourself, like our dancing kid on page 6.

And for all the hard work you've already done, congratulations! May you all have even more wisdom and happiness in the future.

JOURNAL PAGES

A [illegible] Beginning

Jane Maureen C. Amata
Botolan South Central School
Botolan, Zambales

I WAS staring at the blue skies while sturdy tall trees were gazing at me with branches swaying gracefully. Beside me were bunches of crumpled paper. I was so tired of putting together pieces of ideas into a nature story. All of a sudden, I heard a strange voice and the bubbling flow of the creek just in front of me.

I was startled by a pat on my back. I was remembering when I was slaving away to finish a story for the RCBC writing contest.

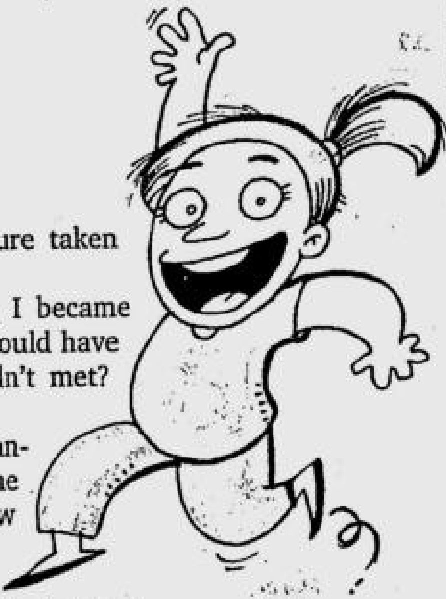
The fourth day of April is a memorable one for me. Yes, I, Jane Maureen C. Amata, was chosen the Grand Prize Winnner for English, Category A of the 8th RCBC Kuwentong Kalikasan, Katha ng Kabataan.

I was stunned. I was shocked. I couldn't say a word. The experience of having been read about and seen by millions of people in different newspapers, of being interviewed by well-respected journalists are experiences that put me to silence. That's not all. I've also been to Manila Peninsula with my mom, my tita, my principal, Ms Myrna D. Lactaotao, my teachers, Mrs. Corazon Datugan and Ms Salome B. Datugan. I've seen a lot of people and have been exposed to a new environment that a little girl like me never knew existed. And of course, receiving cash awards plus a scholarship grant is a good reason for me to thank God and the person behind this event.

It's great, yes. Though I know after this limelight, a challenge is left to me. This is not the end but only the beginning. The beginning of a challenge to study harder. With those who keep on believing in me, I could aim higher, dream farther and live life to its fullest.

Geraldine Lendz

By Angela Michelle Antipolo



FOR me, one of the best learning phase is high school. This is where I experienced winning 1st place in cheerdance; where I made real friends; and where I would use up my phone load in a few hours. It's also where I have made a lot of *pa*-cute and all that, but, with my best friend, Lendz.

Her real name is Geraldine, but I gave her the nickname Lendz. It's the second syllable of her surname. She gave me "Pagee," (pronounced "Pajee") as my new nick.

She's smaller than I am (a.k.a. cute). She has long, shiny, black hair which I envy because I have wavy locks. (Just wait and see...) Sometimes I even tell people who also envy her hair, "*Eh.. nagpa*-rebond *yan noh, mas kulot pa nga yan sakin e*!!" But all she can do is laugh, because she knows—I hope—that I'm only playing jokes. She loves Amy Lee & Daniel Radcliffe. She hates Meteor Garden, she loves Lizzie Mcguire, "Fashiont TV" & "MTV BiteMe: Evanescence."

She has been my best friend for a long time. We've been through a lot of "*alitans*" and "*pacutes*," as most friends have. She celebrated her birthday last Jan. 2, and we had a blast! Together with my other pals, we went to G4, watched "Malikmata," ate popcorns, hung out at Starbucks, had our picture taken and all. It was fun!

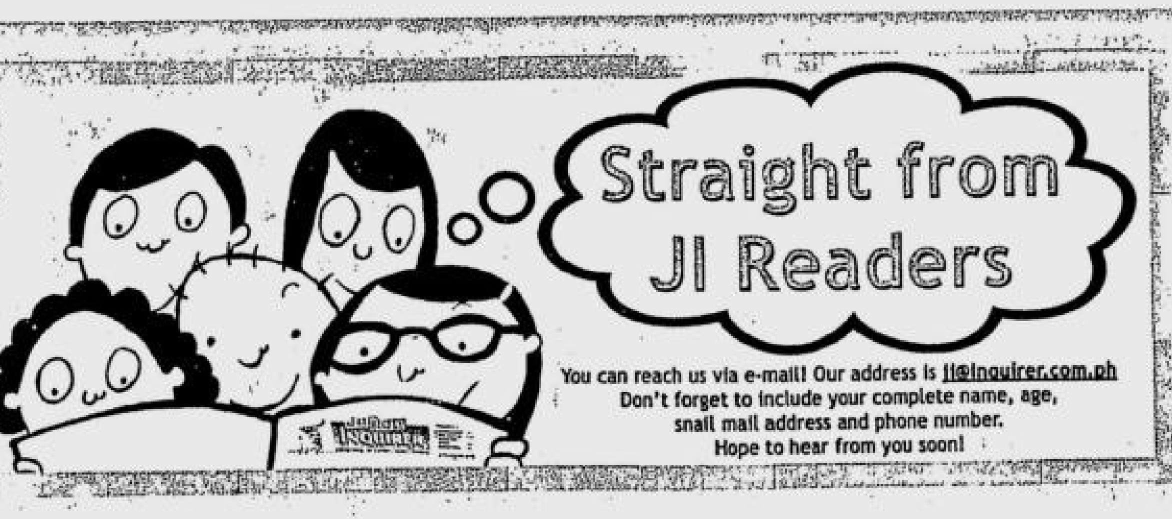
After I got home, I became sentimental. What would have happened if we hadn't met? Cheesy but true.

She'll be going to another country anytime soon, we don't know when. Whenever I text her about it, the Lendz who's usually "*kalog*" suddenly turns into a drama queen. It's like I'm not myself, because we share our thoughts of what could happen by the time she leaves and moves miles away.

She's been there for me. Even if she had to use up her prepaid, she has always been there to comfort me.

I just want her to know, when the time comes that she has to go, still, her laugh, the way she sneezes, her burping skills, her amazing hair will always stay with me, no matter what.

Sound Familiar ?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!



You can reach us via e-mail! Our address is ji@inquirer.com.ph
Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and phone number.
Hope to hear from you soon!

Me and Kids At Art

I JOINED an On-the-Spot Halloween Mask-Making art contest in SM Megamall. When I finished my project and it was time to announce the winners, I was very surprised to hear my name called. Then the time came for me to go up on stage. My legs were shaking as I saw all the people. Then I remembered the time when I first joined Kids At Art. The teachers taught me a lot. I had a flashback of all the things I learned at Kids At Art. So it's my chance to prove it and I did because I won the prize. It's a lot of fun to be in Kids At Art. They gave me interesting teachings about art. I learned how to draw, paint and how to make crafts.

I joined Kids At Art when I was still 4 years old. So I grew up taking lessons from Kids At Art. My experience with them was really fun and enjoyable.

I've been there for about seven years and I still remember all the different things I've learned. I used the things that they taught me by sharing my talent with others.

I share my talent through making cards, gifts, drawings and paintings. I share these things in school, community and at home.—**NATASHA LUISTRO**, 10, St. Theresa's College, Quezon City

Eline's Fan

DEAR Editor,

Could you please feature a picture of your writer Miss Eline Santos?

We kids at JASMS want to be reminded of the beautiful writer who interviewed us. Thank you and more power!—TIMOTHY BRYAN ELLAMIL, 13, JASMS Manila

Dear Timothy,

Here is something for the mice in your house. Haha!—Eline Santos

ELINE AT SEA. JI writer and friend check Manila Bay for evidence of red tide. Guess which one is Eline Santos.

WE need writers

IF YOU'RE 10-12 years old and can write very good essays, news and feature stories, we would like to hear from you! Write a 200-300 word essay about your most memorable experience in school and send it to the editor at nvizcarra@inquirer.com.ph with your contact details.

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From trying to color within the lines in preschool, you can now create wonderful works of art. See how focusing on the task at hand won the day for two young artists on page 1.

But no matter how much you know already, learning is a life-long thing. You can learn through reading books, listening to people, or trying out new things.

If you've been thinking of trying something out but were a little shy, pluck up your courage and plunge in. You might be delighted at the new things you learn about yourself, like our dancing kid on page 6.

And for all the hard work you've already done, congratulations! May you all have even more wisdom and happiness in the future.

By Angela Michelle Antipolo

FOR me, one of the best learning phase is high school. This is where I experienced winning 1st place in cheerdance; where I made real friends; and where I would use up my phone load in a few hours. It's also where I have made a lot of *pa*-cute and all that, but, with my best friend, Lendz.

Her real name is Geraldine, but I gave her the nickname Lendz. It's the second syllable of her surname. She gave me "Pagee," (pronounced "Pajee") as my new nick.

She's smaller than I am (a.k.a. cute). She has long, shiny, black hair which I envy because I have wavy locks. (Just wait and see...) Sometimes I even tell people who also envy her hair, "*Eh.. nagpa*-rebond *yan noh, mas kulot pa nga yan sakin e!!*" But all she can do is laugh, because she knows—I hope—that I'm only playing jokes. She loves Amy Lee & Daniel Radcliffe. She hates Meteor Garden, she loves Lizzie Mcguire, "Fashiont TV" & "MTV BiteMe: Evanescence."

She has been my best friend for a long time. We've been through a lot of "*alitans*" and "*pacutes*," as most friends have. She celebrated her birthday last Jan. 2, and we had a blast! Together with my other pals, we went to G4, watched "Malikmata," ate popcorns, hung out at Starbucks, had our picture taken and all. It was fun!

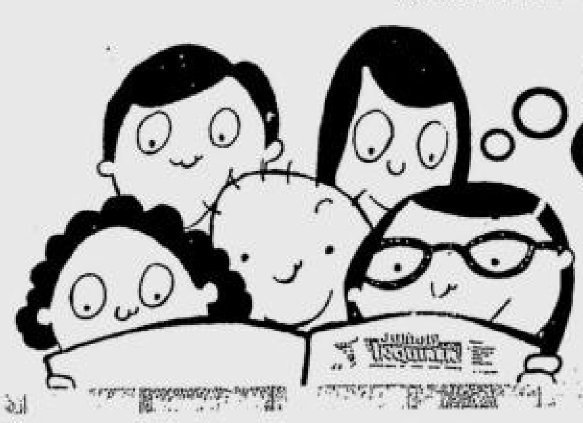
After I got home, I became sentimental. What would have happened if we hadn't met? Cheesy but true.

She'll be going to another country anytime soon, we don't know when. Whenever I text her about it, the Lendz who's usually "*kalog*" suddenly turns into a drama queen. It's like I'm not myself, because we share our thoughts of what could happen by the time she leaves and moves miles away.

She's been there for me. Even if she had to use up her prepaid, she has always been there to comfort me.

I just want her to know, when the time comes that she has to go, still, her laugh, the way she sneezes, her burping skills, her amazing hair will always stay with me, no matter what.

Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!



Straight from JI Readers

You can reach us via e-mail! Our address is ji@inquirer.com.ph
Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and phone number.
Hope to hear from you soon!

Me and Kids At Art

I JOINED an On-the-Spot Halloween Mask-Making art contest in SM Megamall. When I finished my project and it was time to announce the winners, I was very surprised to hear my name called. Then the time came for me to go up on stage. My legs were shaking as I saw all the people. Then I remembered the time when I first joined Kids At Art. The teachers taught me a lot. I had a flashback of all the things I learned at Kids At Art. So it's my chance to prove it and I did because I won the prize. It's a lot of fun to be in Kids At Art. They gave me interesting teachings about art. I learned how to draw, paint and how to make crafts.

I joined Kids At Art when I was still 4 years old. So I grew up taking lessons from Kids At Art. My experience with them was really fun and enjoyable.

I've been there for about seven years and I still remember all the different things I've learned. I used the things that they taught me by sharing my talent with others.

I share my talent through making cards, gifts, drawings and paintings. I share these things in school, community and at home.—**NATASHA LUISTRO**, 10, St. Theresa's College, Quezon City

Eline's Fan

DEAR Editor,

Could you please feature a picture of your writer Miss Eline Santos?

We kids at JASMS want to be reminded of the beautiful writer who interviewed us. Thank you and more power!—TIMOTHY BRYAN ELLAMIL, 13, JASMS Manila

Dear Timothy,

Here is something for the mice in your house. Haha!—Eline Santos

ELINE AT SEA. JI writer and friend check Manila Bay for evidence of red tide. Guess which one is Eline Santos.

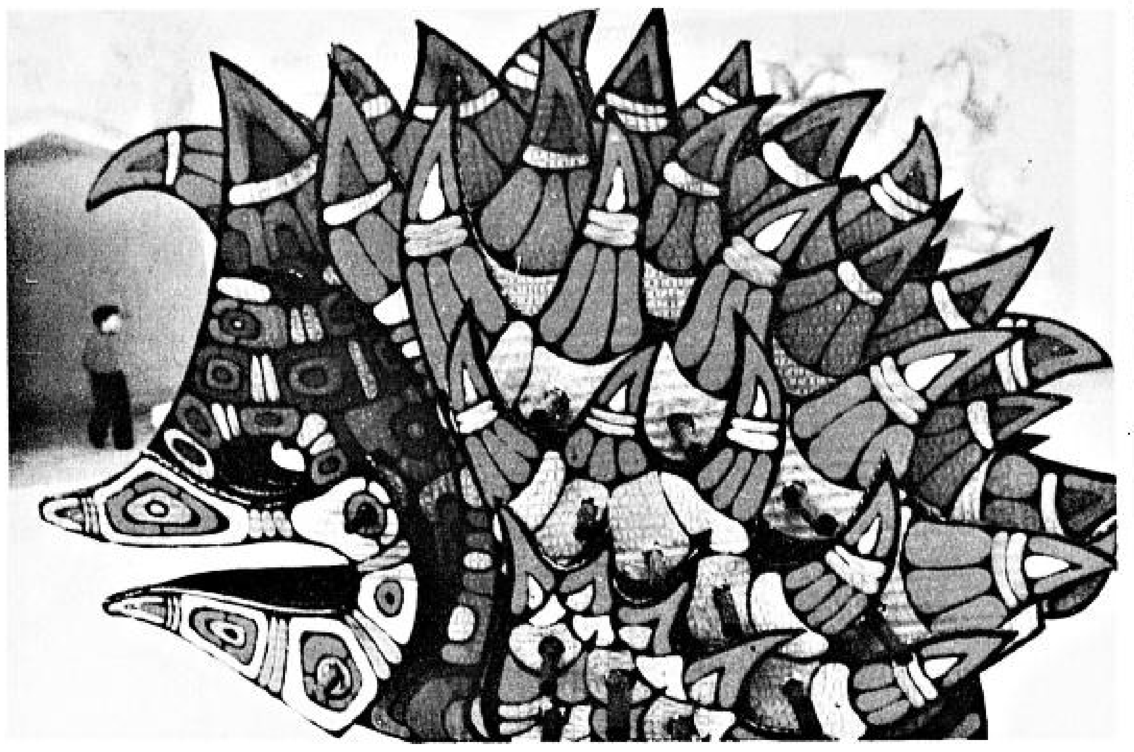
WE need writers

IF YOU'RE 10-12 years old and can write very good essays, news and feature stories, we would like to hear from you! Write a 200-300 word essay about your most memorable experience in school and send it to the editor at nvizcarra@inquirer.com.ph with your contact details.

WORLD SCOPE
Hanover Germany
Moscow Russia
Varna Bulgaria
Ancient Olympia Greece

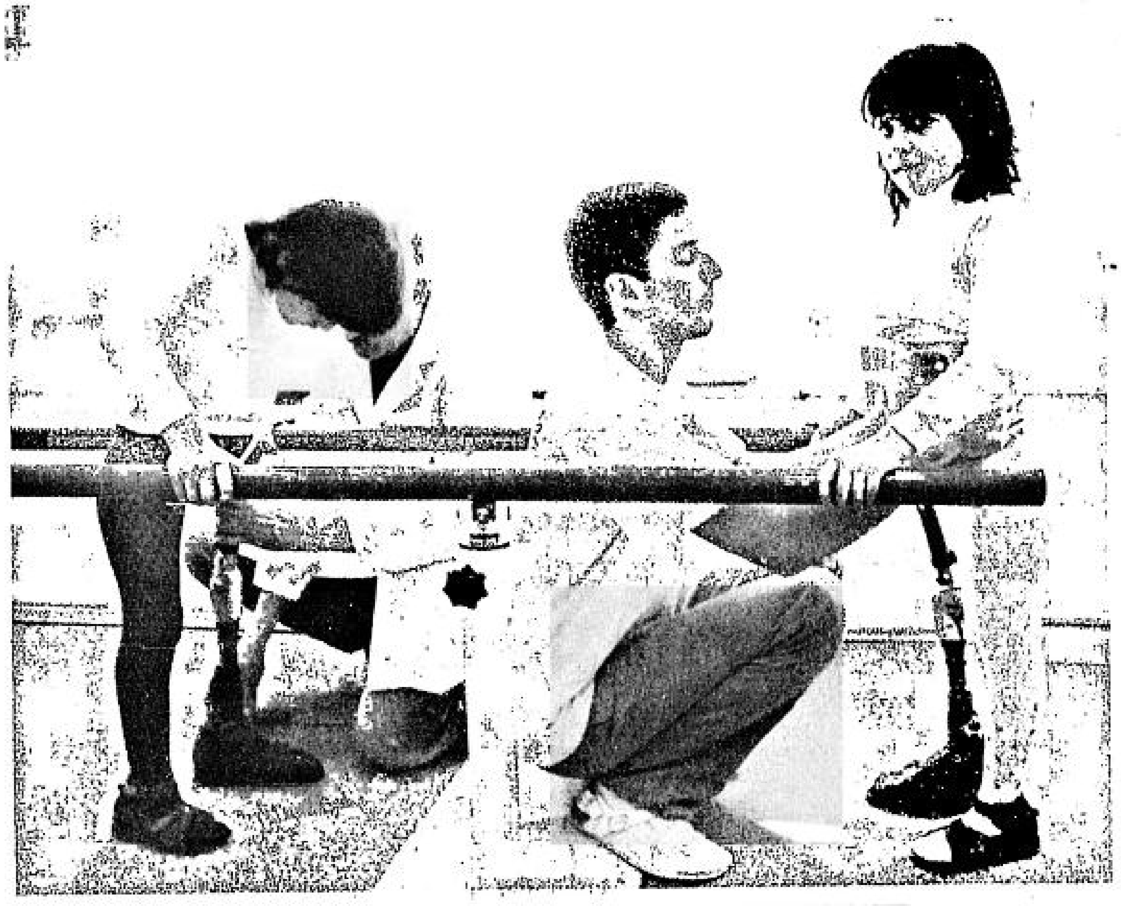
Olympic Flame Lit

A GREEK actress dressed as the high-priestess carries the Olympic Flame into the ancient stadium in Olympia. The ceremony on March 25 marked the start of the Olympic Torch Relay. It will travel the globe in 78 days and 78,000 km before the Games on Aug. 13. *Reuters*



Animal Art

A VISITOR stands behind a composition called "Hedgehog" made by artist Dmitry Khokhlovkin from cardboard and wood and displayed at the international exhibition of animalist art "Ark" in St. Petersburg. About 200 artists from Russia, Baltic countries, Europe and USA displayed their works at the exhibition. *Reuters*



New Legs

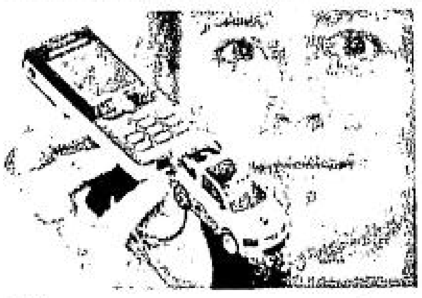
DOCTORS train Zita (R) and Gita (L) Rezakhanova, 12-year-old Siamese twin sisters from Kyrgyzstan separated in a risky 10-hour operation last year in Moscow. The girls, born attached at the abdomen and pelvis and sharing several internal organs, have to learn from scratch how to live separately. *Reuters*

Super Superstitious

A BULGARIAN woman puts on her head a magic corona. Half of all Bulgarians believe in black magic, telepathy and the ability to read the future in dreams. One Bulgarian in five believes that ghosts exist, that black cats are unlucky and that it is possible to make contact with the dead. *AFP*

What? No Toothpick???

CHECK OUT the Swiss army knife with a 128MB USB Memory Stick. The small tool combines a red LED-light, a pen, a small knife, a screwdriver, scissors and the memory stick. It was presented during the CeBIT computer fair in Hanover last week. *AP*

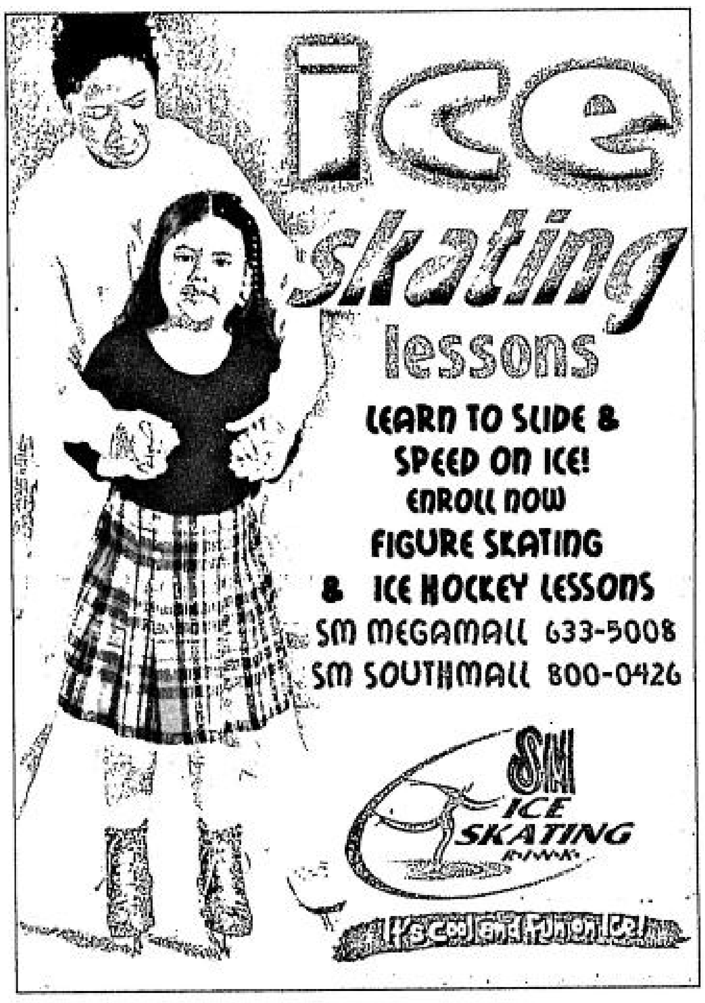


Charge your car with your phone

A SONY Ericsson employee presents the phone-powered and steered Bluetooth car "CAR-100." The "CAR-100" is an electronic gadget which is charged using a mobile phone and can be remote-controlled within a range of up to 10 meters. It was also launched during the CEBIT computer fair. *AP*

Porcine Glory

A PIGLET runs during the pig races in Moscow. The city held its first pig races in over 100 years as Russian pig farmers try to revive a little known racing tradition. For the pigs, this is a chance not only to win a pail of carrots with whipped cream dressing, but also to escape the slaughterhouse and capture porcine glory. *Reuters*


Ice skating lessons
LEARN TO SLIDE & SPEED ON ICE!
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& ICE HOCKEY LESSONS
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Ocean Adventure
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Bahay Kubo X

Most Filipinos speak three languages: Filipino, a provincial di
with the giant veggies and find out how many ways you can sin

Bahay Kubo

Filipino/Tagalog

Bahay kubo
kahit munti
ang halaman doon
ay sari-sari
singkamas at talong
sigarilyas at mani
sitaw, bataw, patani
kundol, patola, upo't kalabasa
at saka meron pa
labanos, mustasa
sibuyas, kamatis, bawang at luya
sa paligid-ligid ay puno ng linga.

Payag-payag

Bicol

Payag-payag
maski sadit
an pananom duman
iba-iba
singkamas asin talong
purupagulong asin mani
antak, bataw, peryoles
tangkwa, patola, upo asin karabasa
asin igwa pa
rabanos, mustasa
sibulyas, kamatis, bawang asin la-ya
sa palibot pano nin linga.

Salin ni Sheilee Boras-Vega

Bay na payag

Cebuano

Bay na payag
bisan gamay
ang tanum didto
ga lain-lain
singkamas ug taong
sigadilyas ug mani
batong, bataw, patani
kundol, sikwa, balantiyong ug kalabasa
ug aduna pa
rabanos, mustasa
sibuyas, kamatis, ahos ug luy-a
ang palibot daghang og lunga.

Salin ni G. Sagadal Salvador, Adelle Geraldo, at Minerva Generalao

Balay na

Hiligayn

Baláy na p
biskan ga
ang mga ta
may lain-l
singkamas ka
sigarilyas ka
balatong, bata
kundol, patola, kalub
kag may a
rabanos, m
sibuyas, kamatis, a
kag sa palibot sini mad

Salin ni Rosie

On the Drafted Piece of Paper

Poetry by Laura Victoria Lehmann
Illustration by Jason Moss

You need me
I need you
We need all existing, too
For what reason do we hurt
The creatures that we think
are dirt
Suppose the wild proceed to say
Our ranks are glad
and always gay
Surely we are all quite wrong
The creatures will not think
for long
Never ever they imagine
Humans in a friendly pageant
How come humans tend to harm
All the animals in a barn
Do the wild void our name
Are we invalid from our fame
If you think through this poem
I'm sure you'll agree
That you and I want to be
Drafted down a piece of paper
Of all the great
And not the caper.

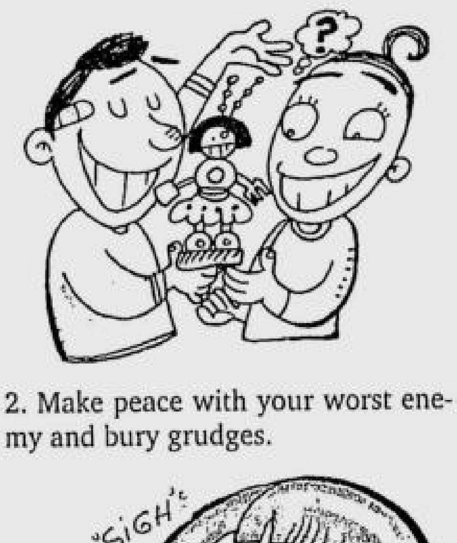
Laura, 10, is a Grade 5 student at International School Manila. She wrote this poem on ecology for a school project.

Jason is a painter, illustrator and editorial cartoonist.

By Karen Anne C. Liquete

CLUELESS about what you want to do this year? Tired of the usual gimmicks and parties? Here are some tips on how to have more meaningful fun this 2004.

1. Use your creative flair to craft one of a kind creations using crochet, needlework and sewing materials.



2. Make peace with your worst enemy and bury grudges.

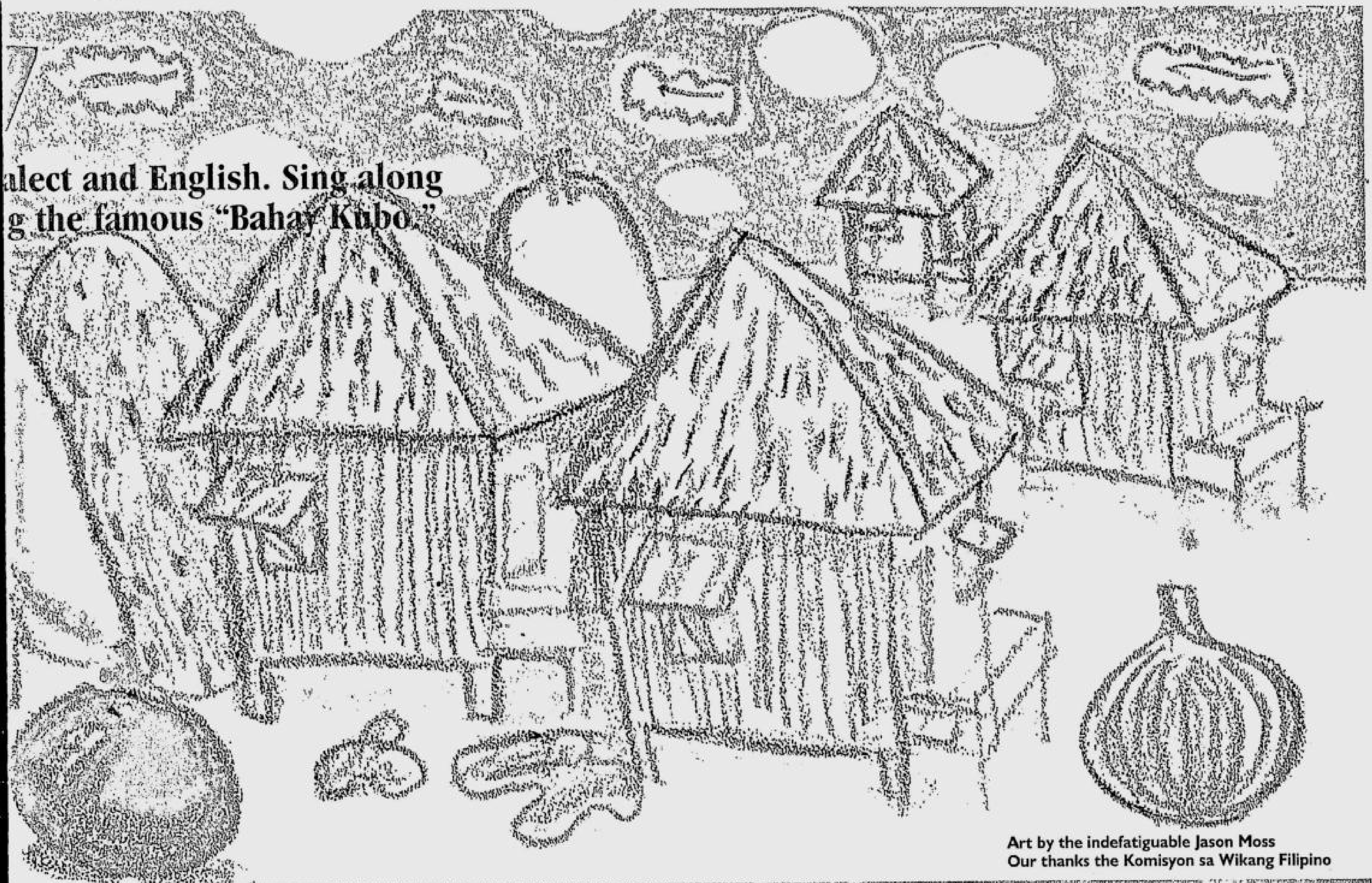
3. Learn one new word a day to broaden your knowledge of words.

4. Open an ac
never too early
rainy day.
5. Try most sp

6. Read the cl

7. Be a big sist
8. Map out yo
know your a
sense of histo

alect and English. Sing along
g the famous "Bahay Kubo"



Art by the indefatigable Jason Moss
Our thanks the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino

Payag

on

yag
nay
nom
nin
talong
mani
, patani
y kag kalabasa
pa
stasa
os kag luy-a
mo sang lunga.

artinez

Balay nga Abung

Ilocano

Baláy nga ábung
uray bassit
ti mul-mula idiay
ket nadumaduma
singkamas ken tarong
palláng ken mani
otong, parda, patani
tangkoy, kabatiti, tabongaw, karabasa
ken adda pay
rabanos, mustasa
lasuna, kamatis, bawang ken laya
ti aglawlaw ket napunno ti lengngá.

Salin ni Ella Huertas at Edward Llantada

Baleng Pawid

Pampango

Baleng pawid
maski ya malati
deng tanaman ka rin
ali aliwa la
singkamas, balasenas
sigarilyas saka mani
kamangyan, bataw, patani
kundol, patola, upo, kalabasa
ampong atin pa
labanos, mustasa
sibuyas, kamatis, bawang saka laya
king paligid-ligid ay mitmu yang linga.

Salin ni Irma Canilao

The Nipa Hut

English

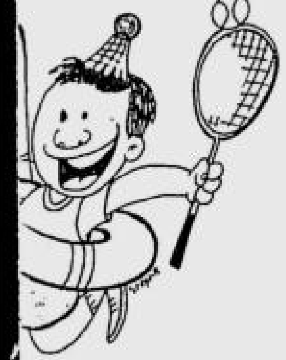
The nipa hut
though small it may be
all the plants you will see
are of a variety
turnips and eggplants
winged beans and peanuts
string beans, hyacinth beans, lima beans
winter melons, sponge gourds, bottle gourds
and some squash
and oh so many more
radishes and mustard
onions, tomatoes, garlic and ginger
everywhere that you look
you'll see sesame plants.

Translation by Brenda Jean Postrero
and the Inquirer Research Section

Guide To Fun for 2004

ount in the bank. It's
to save money for a

rts once.



ssics.

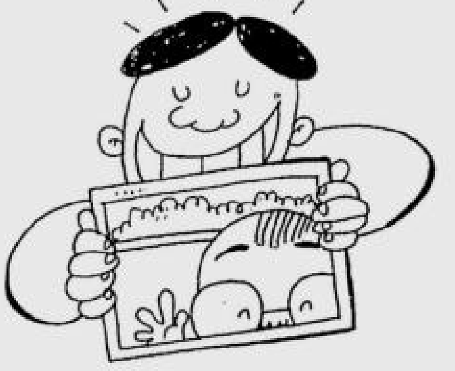
r to someone.
ur family tree. Get to
cestors and bring a
ry to your life. That way, you'll learn to appreciate and love your family more.

9. Make worship more meaningful. Join the church choir, read passages from the Bible, or take charge in giving out the collection baskets during mass.

10. Organize an inter-school soiree with the drama club or debating team of an all-boys school.

11. Free the shutterbug in you. Sign up for a basic photography class. Develop your eye for taking good pictures. Then, volunteer to be the resident photographer of your school's newsletter.

12. Plan a grade school reunion. Catch up with your friends from Grade 6 and talk about the many wonderful changes you're all going through.



13. Write poems and read them at a swanky coffee shop.

14. Redecorate your room from ceiling to floor using Feng Shui tips.

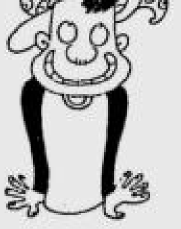
15. Go stargazing with friends and learn to identify the major constellations.

16. Dust off your old toy collections and play with them—just this once.

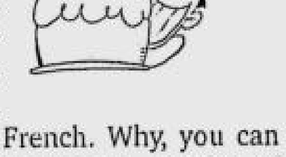
17. Write all your thoughts in a journal.

18. Start your scrapbook collection.

19. Adopt a pet. If you can't own a pooch at home, why not take care of fishes and birds instead?



20. Have you always envied the way your sister bakes all those luscious chiffon cakes? Stop the green monster and start enrolling in a cooking class today. There's a wide variety of cooking specialties to choose from like Italian, Spanish, and French. Why, you can even try Mediterranean cooking if you want.



21. Lend a hand and build houses for the poor. Sign up at www.habitat.org.

22. Feel sorry for the sick kids you see featured on TV? Why not do your best to help? Volunteer your time helping sick children get well by signing up as a regular visitor in a children's hospital. Be the resident clown for the day and give the kids some candies. Small acts like these help brighten their outlook in life.

23. Be politically aware. Know the profiles of your presidential candidates and make an informed choice.

24. Be a political watchdog. Join Namfrel's pool of volunteers to watch the ballot counting this election.

25. Make your own Entrepreneur's Pool. Buddy up with some friends and find ways to start a new business together.

26. Volunteer as an usher at the CCP. Not only do you get first dibs on cultural events you also get to see the shows for free.

27. Conquer your fear of the dance floor. Get into the beat by enrolling in some dance classes. Take your pick from ballroom dancing styles like tango, rumba or swing to modern styles like hip-hop and street-dancing.

28. Pitch a tent in your backyard and invite all your cousins to sleep overnight with you. Prepare hotdogs and marshmallows and pretend you're at camp.

Karen writes TV and radio commercials for an advertising agency. She loves writing tips like these for kids.

Kids'r'rrific

Space & Leila

NO sci-fi for this girl. Leila's interested in the science of outer space. RANDY HORMILLOSA

By Eline Santos

FAMILY and friends describe 13-year-old Leila Bautista as a person with plenty of leadership qualities who manages her time well.

In one of her more hectic weeks, the sixth-grader from Miriam College, Quezon City, led their section in the Satulawit (Sayaw, Tula, Awit) activity as the conductress.

This meant making sure everyone knew how to perform their piece together in the best way possible.

"I think our class had the most practice," says the budding leader. "I didn't get any rest, but we won first place."

With studies and swimming already filling up her schedule, any additional activity really takes up all free time and energy.

She does however have lines of 9's on her card and several swimming medals to show for her hard work.

Reaching for Mars

One of Leila's big dreams is to be the first Filipina in outer space, particularly the first one to land on Mars.

"I want to find out if it can be made inhabitable," says the lithe sixth-grader.

She reads everything she can about the subject, takes universe-related quizzes on the Internet, and watches Discovery Channel episodes about outer space.

"When I want something, I work hard for it. I don't let other people stop me from doing what I want."

With her eye on the stars, who knows what heights Leila can reach?

R U RRIFIC?

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're 'Rrific' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
Phil. Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces
corner Yague & Mascardo Sts.
1231 Makati City

Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!

Kid 'r'rrific

nomination form ✂

I nominate: ____________________

Age: ____________________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because: (Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)

____

She/he lives at ____________________

and studies at ____________________

Her/his contact number is: ____________________

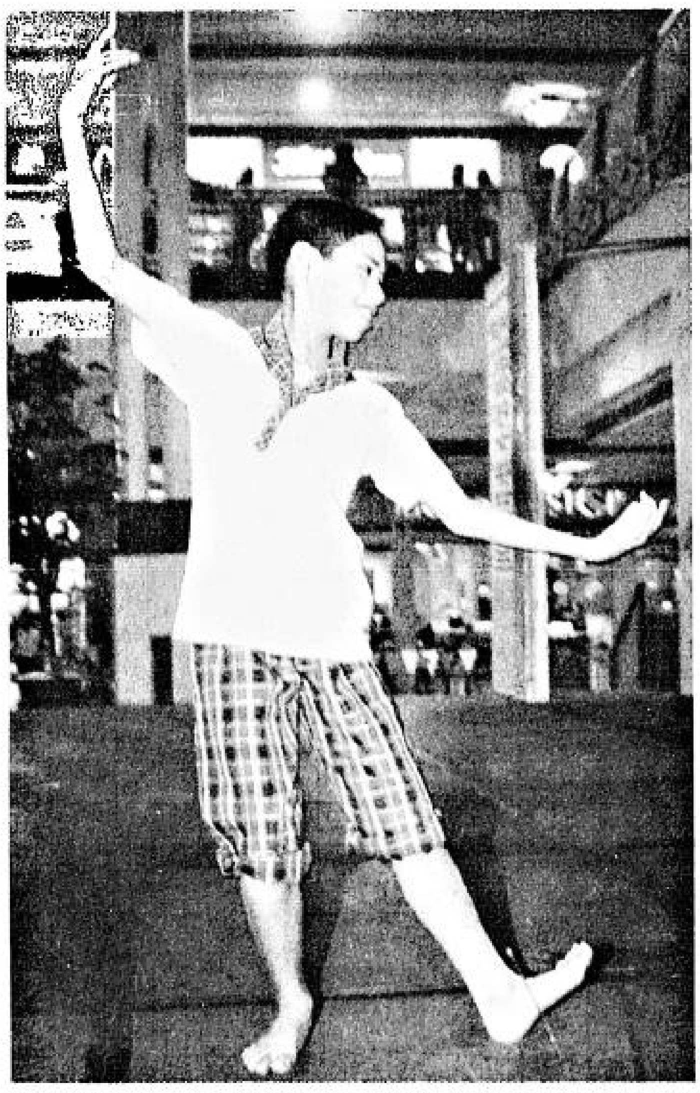
Sender's Name: ____________________

Sender's Age & School: ____________________

Sender's Address: ____________________

Sender's Contact No. ____________________

Dancing with Erl



ERL shows off Visayan grace to Manila audiences during a cultural show. BETOY JOHNSON

By Eline Santos

TWELVE-year-old Erl Emmanuel Sevilla is one of the youngest dancers of the Edwin C. Duero Dance Company. He has been dancing seriously for two years.

"It's exciting. Dancing is very enjoyable," says the fifth-grader from the Central Philippine University in Jaro, Iloilo.

Lots of Trips

"My favorite is the 'Pangalay' and 'Pindulas' because the hand movements are beautiful."

Erl says he gets to travel a bit when they have dances in different places. His most memorable one was a visit to the US.

"You get to experience many things," he says.

The twelve-year-old learns how to be independent and take care of himself whenever he's away from his family.

Shy No More

His teacher, Edwin Duero, is especially proud of Erl because the enthusiastic performer used to be withdrawn and quiet.

Now he shows off his flexibility by doing splits or high kicks at classmates' requests. Erl is also often asked to dance in school presentations.

The fifth-grader is in the top three in his section and enjoys his social studies subject.

"You get to learn a lot of things," says Erl. "You get to learn about the culture of the Philippines, including our dances."

ERL and his partner Erika Marie Harder. BETOY JOHNSON

Batch 2004: Growing Up

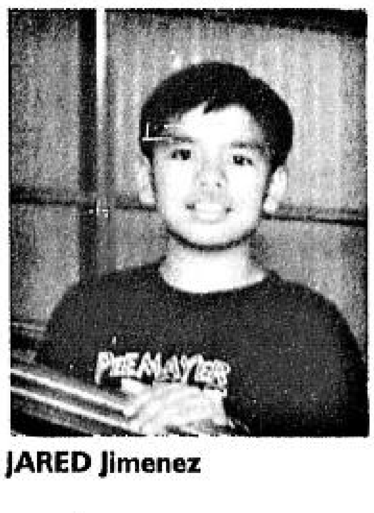
(from page 1)

ers," says the young speech writer.

Having a strong sense of self keeps the kids from going along with every fad or trying hard to be cool.

Carlo Roman, one of the top awardees of Xavier School in San Juan, says he used to keep up with what was new when he was younger. But as he got to discover his own identity, he followed his heart more.

"Just be Carlo. Don't let other people change who you are... That's how you were meant to be," says the student council president and editor of their school paper, Hoofprints.

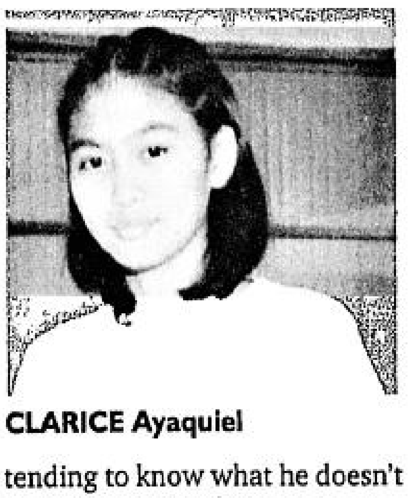


JARED Jimenez

Thirteen-year-old Florante Christopher "Ton Ton" de Jesus Jr. of De La Salle Santiago Zobel in Muntinlupa doesn't want people to think he's the last one to know a piece of news.

NEL Muriel Lee

But despite the pressure of being a scholar, editor of their school paper, and salutatorian of their batch, Ton Ton resists pretending to know what he doesn't just to seem "cool."

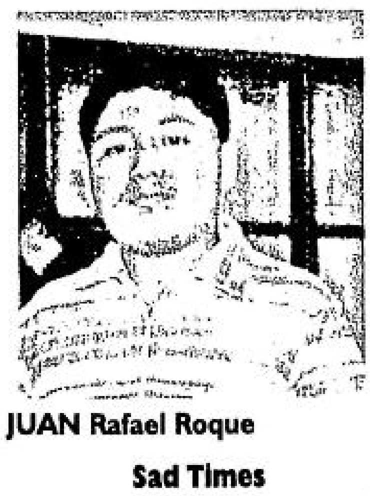


CLARICE Ayaquiel

Happy Mem'ries

For 12-year-old Jared Jimenez, conduct awardee at St. Benedict College, Muntinlupa, having fun and cheering people up are important for life to have worth.

Before a friend moved away, they had a sleepover, watched movies and took pictures—"so we would remember that moment, that you were in this place and you were happy," says Jared.



JUAN Rafael Roque

Sad Times

For 13-year-old Viktor Andre Fumar, class speaker for batch 2004 of the Ateneo Grade School in Quezon City, the most painful memory was losing his father in sixth grade.

Instead of doing badly in his exams because of his grief, Viktor did exceptionally well instead.

"My Dad's advice was to never engage in self-pity," Viktor says. "It might sound simple but it really helps."

High school, here we come!

Twelve-year-old Nel Murile Lee, a top student at St. Scholastica's College in Manila, expects there will be more challenges and stricter teachers in high school. She plans to double her efforts to study.

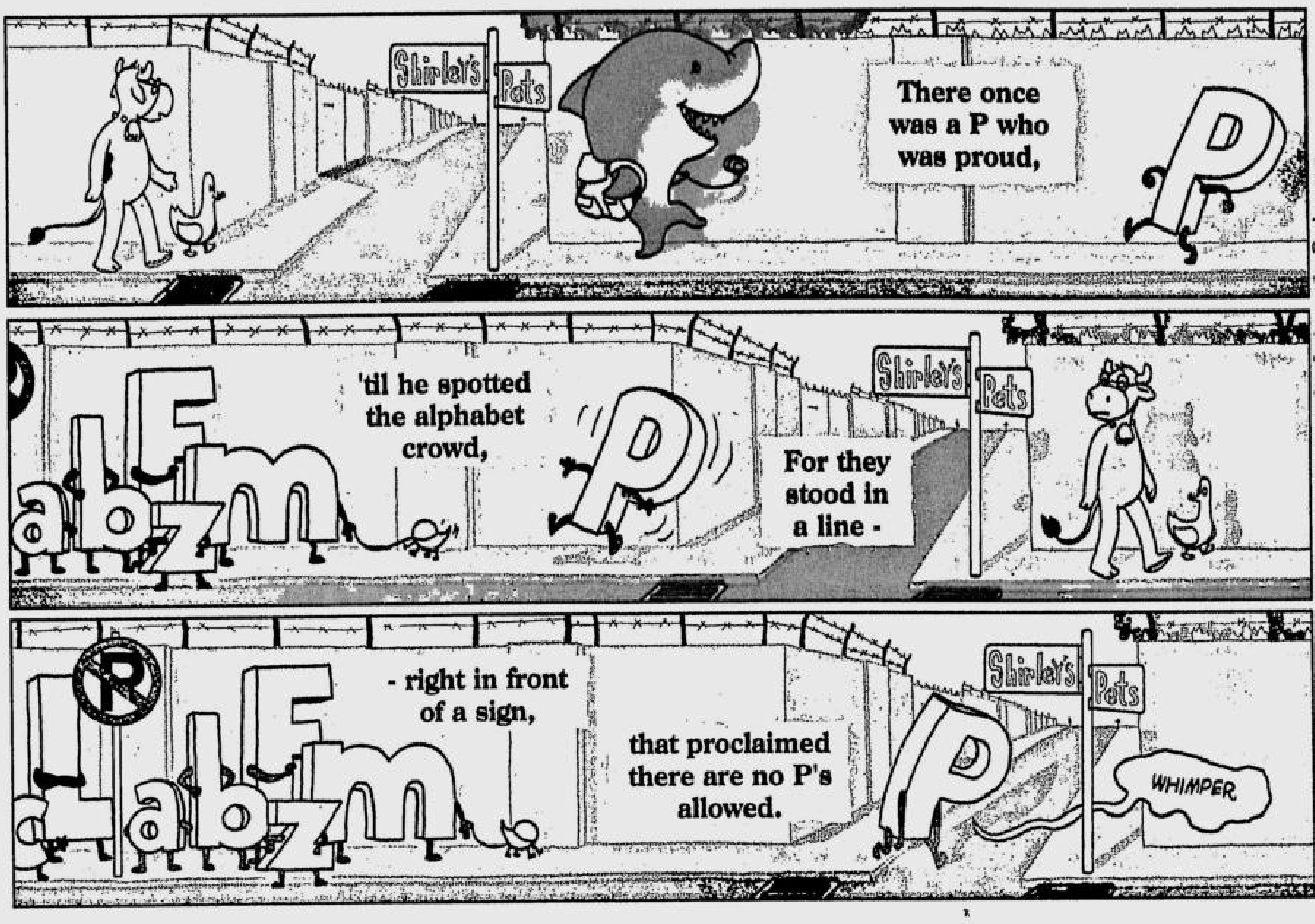
Twelve-year-old Claudia Patricia "Clarice" Ayaquil, valedictorian and student council president of St. Joseph's College in Quezon City, is hoping for more freedom in high school.

Support

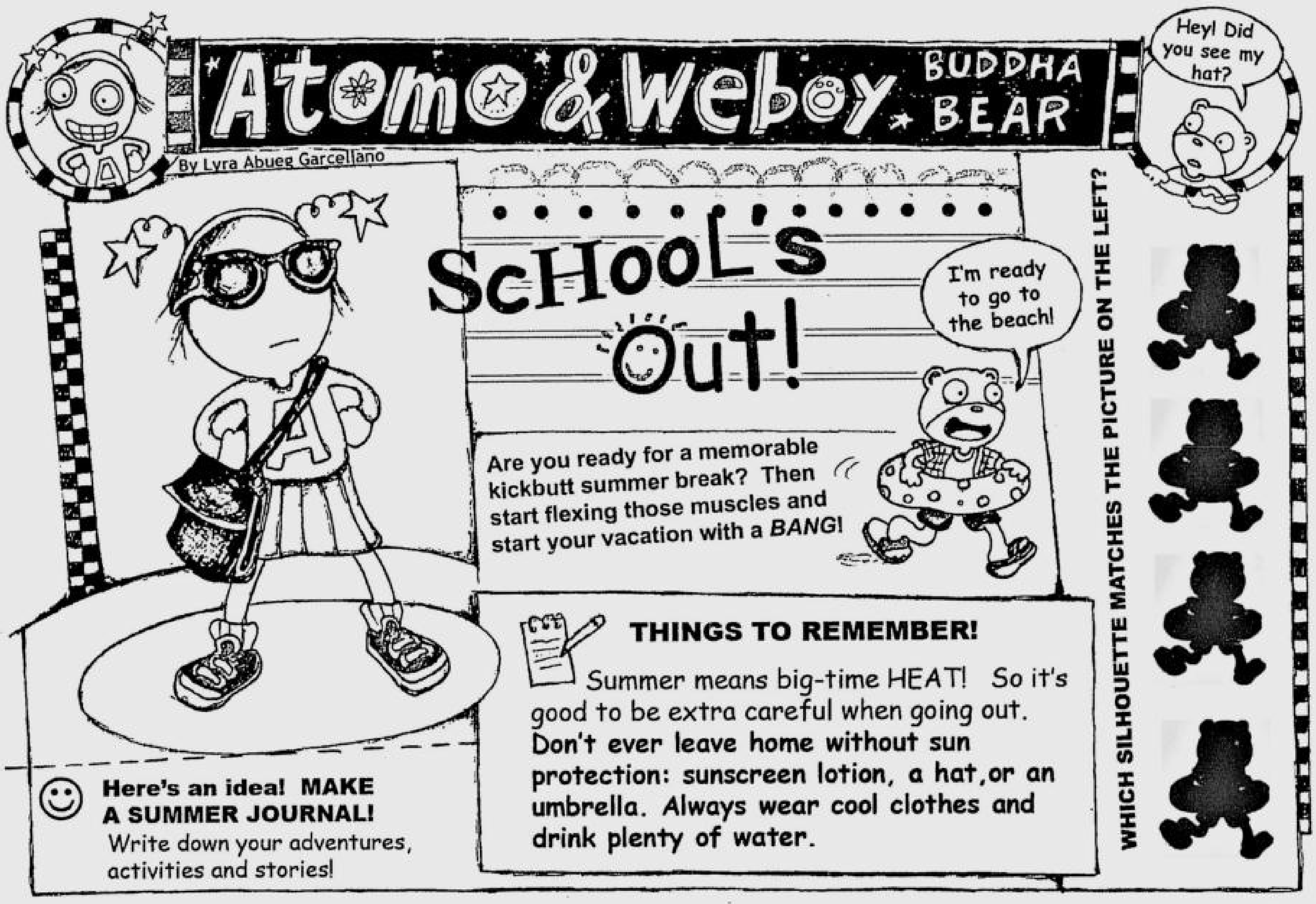
Thirteen-year-old Chiara Lanuza, class speaker for the seventh-graders of Poveda Learning Centre in Quezon City, attributes her success to the support and encouragement of family and friends.

When she was discouraged, her parents would tell her it would be worth it in the end.

"I'm really happy all that work paid off—the late nights really paid off. It's not so much the awards but the experience. You learn more about yourself and different things."


Shirley's
Pets
There once was a P who was proud,
'til he spotted the alphabet crowd,
Shirley's
Pets
For they stood in a line -
- right in front of a sign,
that proclaimed there are no P's allowed.
Shirley's
Pets
WHIMPER

Copyright © 2004 Robert Gunnar Magnuson www.shirleyspets.tk fowlcowcreation@yahoo.com


Atomo & Weboy BUDDHA BEAR
Hey! Did you see my hat?
SchooL's Out!
I'm ready to go to the beach!
WHICH SILHOUETTE MATCHES THE PICTURE ON THE LEFT?

By Lyra Abueg Garcellano

Are you ready for a memorable kickbutt summer break? Then start flexing those muscles and start your vacation with a *BANG*!

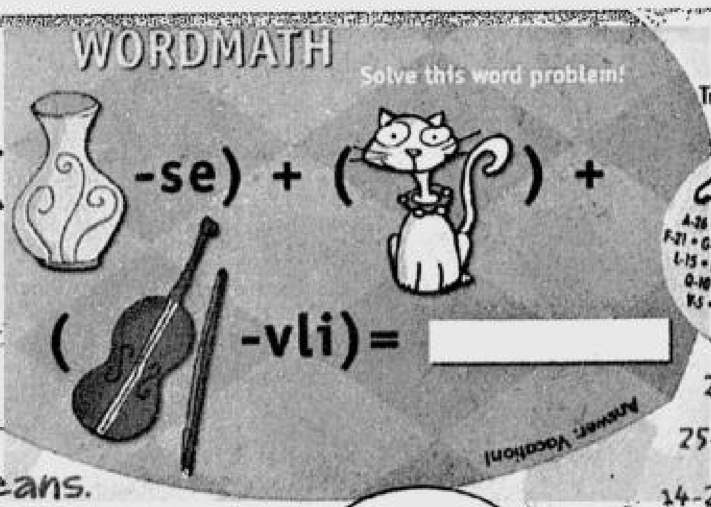
THINGS TO REMEMBER!

Summer means big-time HEAT! So it's good to be extra careful when going out. **Don't ever leave home without sun protection: sunscreen lotion, a hat,or an umbrella. Always wear cool clothes and drink plenty of water.**

Here's an idea! MAKE A SUMMER JOURNAL!
Write down your adventures, activities and stories!

THE LUNCH BOX

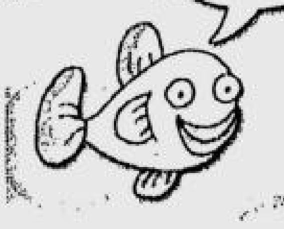
by Katrina B. Villa


WORDMATH
Solve this word problem!
(-se) + ( ) +
(-vli)=
Answer: Vacation!

The world has three* big oceans.

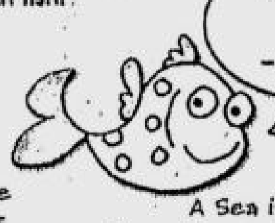
Can you name them? Unscramble the letters from each fish!

TANLACIT
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _



72% of the Earth's surface is covered by ocean! That's a lot of water!

FICACIP
_ _ _ _ _ _ _



A Sea is smaller than an ocean, and is partly surrounded by land.

NADINI
_ _ _ _ _ _

*Some scientists say that there are FOUR oceans, not three. In addition to the three mentioned by our fish, there is the ARCTIC Ocean. Others say there are FIVE, counting the ANTARCTIC Ocean!

Answer: Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean!

Going somewhere?

Travelling around the country this summer? Break the codes below for some interesting places to go!

Use your key!
A-26 • B-25 • C-24 • D-23 • E-22
F-21 • G-20 • H-19 • I-18 • J-17 • K-16
L-15 • M-14 • N-13 • O-12 • P-11
Q-10 • R-9 • S-8 • T-7 • U-6
V-5 • W-4 • X-3 • Y-2 • Z-1

25-12-19-12-15 ______
15-26-20-6-13-26 ______
25-26-20-6-18-12 ______
25-26-7-26-13-20-26-8 ______
25-12-9-26-24-26-2 ______
14-26-13-18-15-26 ______
11-26-15-26-4-26-13 ______
23-26-5-26-12 ______
24-22-25-6 ______
25-26-13-26-6-22 ______
18-15-18-20-26-13 ______

Answers: Bohol, Laguna, Baguio, Batangas, Boracay, Manila, Palawan, Davao, Cebu, Banaue, Iligan

Scholasticans on-stage at the CCP

(from page 1)

"I thought it would be cool to play Egeus because he's a strong personality," says 12-year-old Camille Lacaba, "But it's pretty hard."

Camille says she's quite girlish and points out her French-tip nails as proof.

"It's hard to play a man—the way they walk, the way they speak, and the way they look like... It takes a little bit of adjustment."

Thirteen-year-old Jemaima Anna Javier, who plays Oberon, says she was interested in the role partly because of the cool costume. But now that she has to put egg white in her hair to make it stiff, she wouldn't do Oberon if given the choice.

"It's so stinky. I'm really traumatized by the egg," says Jemaima.

"Don't forget to watch 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the CCP Main Theater," Anne Pacolor invites.

"Admission is free!" adds Myki Nakamura.

Those interested to watch the production on March 31 can call Sally Emaas at 524-7686 for ticket reservations.

Hocus Pocus Focus!

(from page 1)

Batang Pinoy."

Jefferson, a fifth-grader from San Miguel Elementary School in Pasig took first place in the Grades 5 to 6 Category with his drawing of a child holding the hand of an elder to his forehead.

"It's very simple. It only has one focus," said Jefferson. "Otherwise the judges might find it confusing."

And it was precisely why Jefferson won.

"It's very focused, very single-minded," is how judge Totet de Jesus described Jefferson's work. De Jesus is a Fine Arts professor at the University of the Philippines. He also found Aleli's work quite focused.

Aleli, a third-grader from Concepcion Elementary School in Marikina, took first place in the Grades 1 to 3 category. She drew a family in the shape of a heart at the center. Around it were kids praying, helping each other out, and showing respect to their elders.

The on-the-spot painting contest was organized by Jollibee Corporation and the Department of Education.

OUT THERE

By Christine A. Paita

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax number is 897-4794, and our e-mail address is ji@inquirer.com.ph.

Arts and Crafts

POSITIVISM ART. Painter E. R. Tagle will conduct a basic art workshop, starting April 1. For inquiries, please call 899-6358 or 0927-552228.

ART'S COOL AT MUSEO. Museo Pambata is now accepting enrollees to Art's Cool, a summer program for kids with workshops in art and painting, arts and crafts, creative writing, and theater arts. Classes will start on April 13. Call 523-1797 to 98.

ARTPLAY'S ART CLASSES. ArtPlay Children's Creative Center, in cooperation with Faber-Castell, opens its art workshop for kids, teens and adults on April 12 until May 22. Call Teacher Mitzi at (632) 726-4707 or 0920-5080875.

ART STROKES. Creative workshops dubbed "Art Strokes" are open to kids and adults alike. Drawing, painting, crafts and creative writing are among the activities included. Contact Eleanor at 0919-7649321 or leave a number at 740-7221 for inquiries.

KIDS AT ART. The Kids At Art workshop from April 12 to May 20 is open to kids ages 5-12. Call 375-6275 for details.

Reading and Writing

READ UP! R.E.A.D. at Psychpros invites kids ages 2-15 to a reading and math adventure. Call 928-0878 or 926-6519 for details. Look for Sarah or Teacher Lani.

STORYTELLING. Hard to imagine a world without laughter? Listen to Eugene Evasco's "Si Isem, Sa Bayang Bawal Tumawa" in a storytelling session on March 27, 10 a.m., at Museo Pambata. The story is about a fun-loving boy who encounters a kingdom of dreary, sad people. Get a chance to meet author Evasco and illustrator John Crisostomo.

FOR YOUNG WRITERS. Check out Young Minds' Creative Writing classes: Module 1-April 20, 27, May 4 and 11, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, for kids ages 8-12; Module 2-April 22, 29, May 6 and 13, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, for kids ages 12-14. Kids can also join arts and craft workshops like Stone Printing, Clay Critters, Pop-Up Books and Puppets on April 14, 21, 28 and May 5.. For registration and other info, please call 892-3210.

LOOK, I DID IT MYSELF! Pediamorphosis House Preschool and Kostka School offers art workshops for kids and teens from April 12 to May 19. Please call Pedia House at 426-0276 or 426-7506, or 426-0334 or 426-4913.

PENS UP! Aspiring writers ages 8-18 can join Tower Book House's writing workshop. The workshop tackles essay writing, feature writing, journalism, short story writing, and playwriting. Interested participants may call 815-6925; 815-4938.

Theater

KIDS ACTS THEATER. Join Kids Acts Philippines' Musical Theater Workshop from April 14 to May 29 at the Philippine Opera Company Music Studio. Kids Acts also offers one-on-one lessons in voice, piano, guitar and other musical instruments. For details, please call 750-1551 or 896-7656.

CREATIVE DRAMATICS. Check out the lineup of workshops CCP has for kids from April 13 to May 8: Creative Dramatics for kids ages 5-8, Tuesday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 12 noon; Creative Dramatics for Children (9-11 years old), Tuesday to Friday, 1-5 p.m.; Teen Theater (12-16 years old), Tuesday to Friday, 1-5 p.m. For more info, please call Ms Nikki Torres at 832-3657 or 832-1125 local 1607.

LEARN PANTOMIME. The Sinag Arts Studio will hold a Pantomime Workshop for kids on March 28 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Ms Haruka Moriyama, a pantomime artist from New York, facilitates. The workshop is free. For inquiries, call 531-3491 or 531-9524.

WANNA APPEAR ON TV? Seven Stars Talent Center, supplier of talents for TV, films and commercials, will hold an acting workshop for kids ages 6-12 starting April 12. For details, call 417-9924 or 930-1890.

AUDITIONS FOR ALICE IN WONDERLAND. Kids Acts will hold auditions for its original production of "Alice in Wonderland, A New Musical" on March 27, 1-6 p.m. at KAPI Artists' Studio, Unit 260, 2F Cityland Pasong Tamo Condominium, 6264 Estacion St., Pio del Pilar, Makati City. For details, please call 750-1551 or 896-7656 and look for Eugene or Luigi.

Singing

CHORUS CLASS. Raring to practice those vocal chords this summer? Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio has the following classes: Music and Movement for kids ages 3-7, Children's Chorus Class for 8- to 13-year-olds, and Female Chorus Class for 14- to 20-year-olds. Auditions for chorus classes are on March 27 and April 3. Individual lessons in voice and piano are also offered. Please contact Melissa or Irene at 844-3330, 843-2874, or 0917-9096484.

More Workshops!

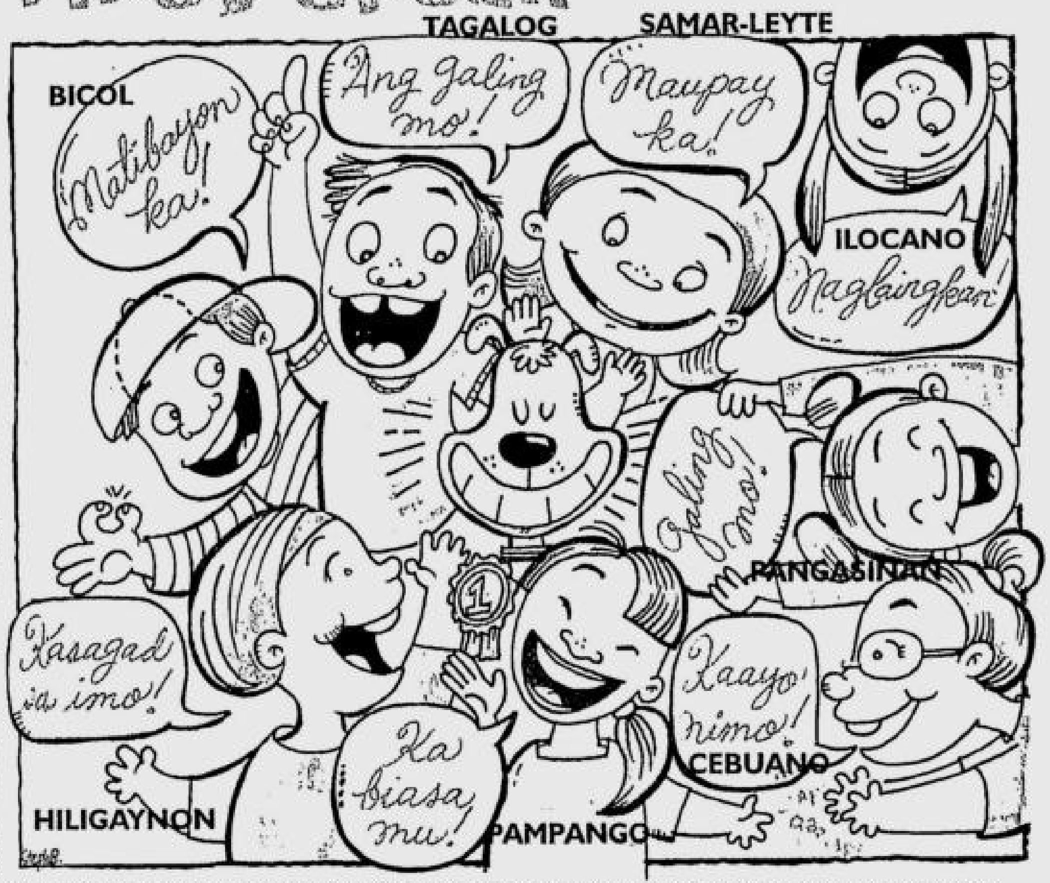
NEW ACTIVITIES. Learn new skills with Little Hands' workshops. Costume-Making for Kids Using Futon Art Techniques is on April 23-25, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Little Hands Carpentry and Tools Workshop is from April 28-30, 2-5 p.m. For inquiries and reservations, call 531-3491 or telefax no. 531-9524.

ANIMATION AND MORE. Trumpets Playshop now offers a course on animation under Phil Cartoon's Rolly Sabado. Other courses are Musical Theater, Basic Acting, One-on-One Voice, Streetdancing, Photography and Modeling. Registration is ongoing. Classes begin April 12 up to June 5. For inquiries, call 636-2842 or 633-5010.

FOR SHUTTERBUGS. Sign up for Mandy Navasero's Digital/SLR Summer Photoworkshop, from April 17 to May 29, Saturdays, 2-5 p.m. Registration is ongoing. Call 899-1767 and 896-3208.

SUMMER HAVEN. Get busy with reading, math, art and cooking classes, open to kids 7 years old and below, at The Learning Haven. Classes will be from May 10-27, Mondays to Thursdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Enrollment is on April 28 and 29. For inquiries, please call 636-0658 or 0917-8139380.

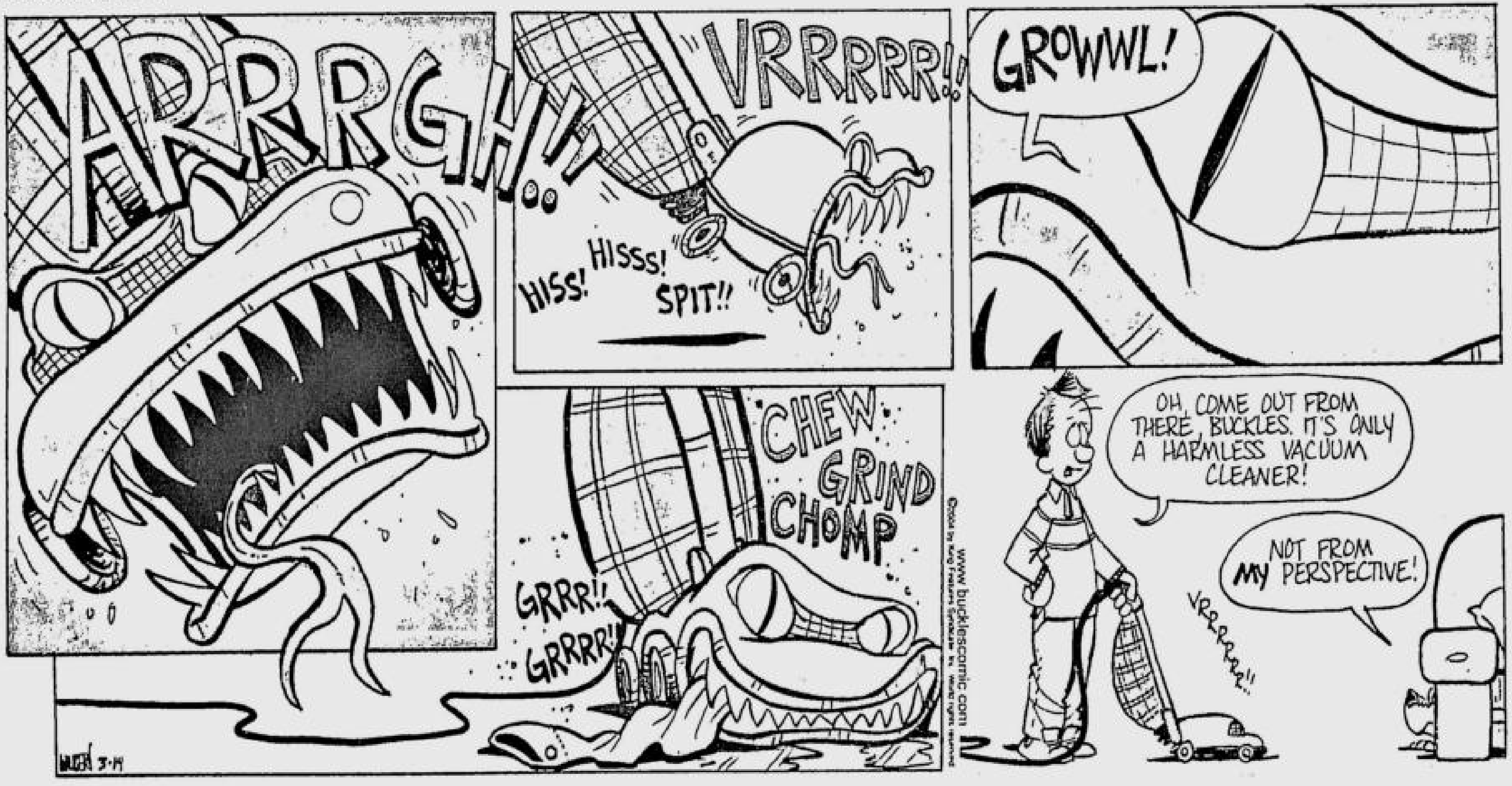
Pinoy-Speak


TAGALOG
SAMAR-LEYTE
BICOL
Matibayon ka!
Ang galing mo!
Maupay ka!
ILOCANO
Naglaingkan!
Galing mo!
PANGASINAN
Kasagad sa imo!
Ka biasa mu!
Kaayo nimo!
CEBUANO
HILIGAYNON
PAMPANGO

COURTESY OF THE TRANSLATION DIVISION OF THE KOMISYON SA WIKANG FILIPINO UNDER COMMISSION CHAIRMAN DR. NITA BUENAOBRA.

BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


ARRRGH!!
VRRRRR!!
HISS!
HISSS!
SPIT!!
GROWWL!
CHEW
GRIND
CHOMP
GRRR!!
GRRRR!
OH, COME OUT FROM THERE, BUCKLES. IT'S ONLY A HARMLESS VACUUM CLEANER!
VRRRRRR!!
NOT FROM MY PERSPECTIVE!
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Squeeze my paw to hear me sing
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